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Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:
<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.00004de1>

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LITERACY AT TRANSITION

*An Exploration of the Continuities and Discontinuities
in Literacy Practices across Secondary Transfer and
their Implications for Literacy Development*

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Doctor of Education (EdD)

January 2001

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Abstract

Literacy at Transition, an interpretative study adopting the sociocultural perspective of literacy as a situated social practice, offers an “experiential” (Murdoch, 1986) examination of commonalities and differences in cross-phase literacy practices. Designed as a small ethnographic case study set in four multi-ethnic inner city schools, it draws on the research traditions of sociolinguistics and classroom literacy research to look qualitatively at literacy practices in Years 6 and 7 (for pupils aged 10-11 and 11-12, hereafter Y6 and Y7). Data collection methods include observation and interview, with data recorded in open-ended fieldnotes and research journal. Progressive focusing and content analysis are used to identify themes and develop a new analytical framework.

Eight key characteristics of the literacy practices are identified. Literacy is an issue of central importance in both phases, reflects elements of both the “autonomous” and “ideological” models (Street, 1984), and fulfils an important function as meaning maker. In Y6 literacy is at the centre of the curriculum as an object of study, whereas in Y7 its value is as a tool to “get something done”. Pedagogical approaches differ but in both phases teacher literacy occupies the dominant position within the classroom literacy practices.

Contributing to the fields of classroom literacy research, primary-secondary school transition and research methodology, this study fulfils a research need for a study which examines the teaching and learning experiences of pupils at the stage of transition from primary to secondary school (DfEE, 1999a). Its description of particular literacy practices adds to the collection of studies of classroom literacy practices. Its analytic framework foregrounds *What is literacy?*, *Whose literacy?* and *How is literacy developed?*, discussing issues of subject positions, literacy and power, and the relationship between teacher understanding and beliefs about literacy and the pedagogical approaches adopted. In addition the study provides a synthesis of the literature relevant to school literacy practices at the stage of primary-secondary transition. Issues of reactivity to changing researcher status and the value of informant contributions are also highlighted.

Further experiential studies of aspects of primary-secondary literacy practices and implications for practice are suggested, including the need for enhanced teacher understanding and experience of cross-phase literacy practices; literacy training for secondary subject teachers; valuing and building on pupils’ existing literacy skills; explicit explanation of cross-phase differences to pupils; “planned discontinuity”; and greater recognition and responsiveness to the multiple literacies operating within the educational arena.

For Alan
whose *Words* are so perceptive.

In the silence around my words
fades something I tried to express.
In the shades surrounding my words
linger meanings I never meant.
A.L.M.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to all those who made this study possible:

The teacher and pupil informants, for their willingness to share information and reflect on their literacy practices.

Barry Stierer, for his thoughtful guidance and encouragement.

ASAP staff, for their tenacious searching out of elusive articles.

Alan Manford, for his unstinting support, willingness to explore ideas and proof-reading skills.

*Chapter 1***Issues and Context****INTRODUCTION**

This study centres around the notion that students leave primary school familiar with particular literacy practices (of their school, home and community) and that their ability to cope with the literacy demands of the secondary school may be affected by the continuities and discontinuities between the literacy practices of these settings. Prime focus is placed on the identification of key commonalities or differences between settings in the belief that (after six or seven years of schooling) mismatch in schooled literacy practices could be a determining factor, although the continued potential influence of home and community literacy practices is recognised. Detailed analysis of these literacy practices illuminates some of the difficulties which pupils encounter and some of the practices which secondary teachers can build on explicitly. It also foregrounds relevant issues and aids the development of “common knowledge” for practitioners in each phase.

Situated in two inner city, multi-ethnic comprehensive schools and the main feeder primary of each, the study is designed as a small ethnographic case study, looking qualitatively at literacy practices and drawing on the research traditions of ethnography, classroom literacy research, sociocultural literacy theory, ethnomethodology and sociolinguistics (including ethnography of communication). An ethnographic perspective on literacy, which assumes that literacy requires detailed, in-depth accounts of actual practices in different cultural settings (Street, 1993, p.1), is adopted since this facilitates operationalisation of the hypothesis that differing literacy practices in each phase present important factors affecting pupils’ ability to cope with secondary

school literacy demands. The aim is to define literacy practices in different contexts and, as Robinson (1987, p.345) suggests, a major contribution of ethnography is its demonstration that the study of literacy is the study of contexts and relations. Whereas (as explained later) many studies of primary-secondary transfer have concentrated on procedural aspects, here the desired focus is experiential. In order to build detailed description of the literacy practices a range of evidence (exceeding that suggested by Heath in *Towards an ethnohistory of writing in American education*, p.27, cited in Luke, 1988, p.15) is offered: explanation of the contexts of the study and of specific literacy events; accounts of literacy events; interpretation of literacy practices and underlying models of literacy, based on observation and information from key informants; and analysis of interaction around and use of texts, types of writing acts, literate roles and relationships, the pedagogical methods employed and the methods of learning the literacy practices.

STRUCTURE OF THE ACCOUNT

The account opens with an explanation of the main issues and their potential interest, posing the key research questions. The following two chapters examine the literature and findings from other research studies, analysing their implications for this study. This discussion deals firstly with the literature of “transition” (Chapter 2), drawing out the important distinction between procedural and experiential studies, and secondly with the literature of “literacy”, identifying three themes within current research into language and literacy which seem pertinent to examination of continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices across settings: *What is literacy?*, *Whose literacy?* and *How is literacy developed?*. To make the research process and the relationship between theoretical positioning and research tools as transparent as possible, Chapter 4 explains the research traditions underpinning the theoretical framework; describes the case; explores the data collection methods and

analytical framework; and finally critiques the design and research tools. The subsequent section (Chapters 5-7) offers analysis of the substantive findings, organised according to the three themes identified within the “literacy” literature review. This is followed by the cross-phase comparison of the emergent continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices. The final chapter discusses the conceptual and methodological implications for both practice and further research.

FOCUS AND RATIONALE

The notion that continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices across secondary transfer may affect literacy development is foregrounded by research into language and literacy in social context and debate over “falling standards” and the “transition gap”. If, as Spencer (1986, p.452) suggests, literacy lies at the heart of transition, it is important to understand that transition.

Research increasingly stresses the embeddedness of language within its social context. The studies of Heath (1983), Street (1984), Scribner and Cole (1988), Cook-Gumperz (1986), Barton and Padmore (1994) and D.Taylor (1994) demonstrate that the social, cultural and cognitive aspects of familiar literacy practices affect the ability to understand the practices, or meet the expectations, of other literacy communities. Extension of this concept to educational settings, highlighting different aspects of literacy practices while reinforcing the notion of different literacy communities, validates the approach and focus of this study. In particular Street’s claim (1995, p.140), that every literacy is learned in a specific context, raises the expectation for discontinuities. An educationally orientated study of learning has to recognise that “schools have their own body of cultural knowledge and their own ways of communicating and legitimising knowledge” (Mercer, 1993, p.3). Despite superficial similarities, educational contexts for literacy learning are strongly differentiated; therefore each class (or phase) can

be viewed as a different literacy community whose members need inducting into the practices of any other group (Bloome and Green, 1992, p.52; Heras, 1994, p.275). Furthermore Edelsky (1996, p.128) suggests that children have to adapt to each teacher's orientation to what written language learning is and how it occurs. Therefore variations in the literacy practices of each phase are to be expected. What this study strives to establish is whether these differences are significant in affecting continuity and progression in student literacy development.

Not only are literacy practices constructed differently but context affects performance in reading and writing depending on participants' familiarity and confidence with a particular activity or setting (Hamilton, 1987, cited in Hamilton, Barton and Ivanic, 1994, p.41). Although Au (1980, p.91) is referring to the mismatch between school and community experiences for young Hawaiian children, her argument that the absence of positive feedback impairs learning for these youngsters, suggests that if pupils are operating to different norms or expectations they may either be deprived of the opportunity to use their existing skills or become cognitively confused by the different response. This notion appears equally relevant to the cross-phase situation.

A number of relevant themes thus arise from the view of literacy as social practice (as in the work of Barton and Padmore, 1994, p.208) and from ethnographies of communication (e.g. Heath, 1983) which have focused on how particular communities socialise children into literate personae.

Important lessons for data collection emerge from the focus of these studies on, for example, the limits and features of situations; choice patterns which children exercise in their language usage; the values and significances of these choices; and the available support networks. The findings of such studies foreground the value of questioning how literacy is defined and of identifying the socially acceptable ways of demonstrating membership of each literacy community (Watrous and Willett, 1984, p.86). Adoption of this situated perspective on

literacy development (Heap, 1991, p.103; Green and Meyer, 1991, p.141), highlighting what actually counts as reading and writing in particular settings, moves away from the traditional psychological approach wherein reading was analysed as a skill, and not only offers potential for identifying possible mismatch between the understandings and practices of each phase, but also underlines the importance of understanding how knowledge is organised and evaluated within each culture (Bloch, cited in Street, 1993, p.35).

Luke (1993a, pp.138-9) suggests that although studies such as that of Scribner and Cole (1981) “relocate the constitutive power of literacy in schooling”, they do not explain how literacy is actually constructed through the spoken and written discourses of those classrooms. He argues that the construction of literacy in classrooms is “neither arbitrary nor idiosyncratic” but rather is a “key normalising and reproductive strategy of schooling”, citing Freebody, Luke and Gilbert (1991) to support his belief that the status and power of texts, textual practices, roles and positions as readers, writers, speakers and hearers are “constructed and partialled out differentially”. Examination of classroom interaction around texts therefore raises awareness of how literacy becomes a site of power relations, inducting pupils into a particular literate culture. The question to be answered is whether there are significant differences in the way the power relations affect the literacy practices of each phase.

This study therefore explores the need for guided transition into the literacy practices of the secondary school. It also aims to identify common features that enable pupils to function effectively in each setting. Street (1997) stressed the importance of research into home literacy practices to see whether this provides a key to the identification of strategies for aiding pupils who experience difficulties with schooled literacy practices. Research comparing the literacy practices of the primary and secondary phases is equally informative.

Literacy levels are an issue of concern to Government, teachers, parents and pupils. Media attention frequently focuses on “falling standards” yet what is the reality? Y7 pupils continue to arrive in the secondary school unable to score on standardised reading tests or to cope with the literacy demands of the secondary curriculum but this does not necessarily mean that they lack literacy skills or that standards are falling, (comparing literacy standards over time is difficult (Lewis and Wray, 2000, pp.1-2)). It does, however, imply the need to examine the literacy practices to which these students are accustomed and how these experiences can be matched to and developed within the expectations of their new setting.

Overviews of Government reports on falling standards and debates about effective pedagogical strategies by Webster, Beveridge and Reed (1996, pp.6-7), Wray and Lewis (1997, pp.1-2) and Barton and Hamilton (1998, pp.20-21) highlight two central issues: firstly, that what is important is not whether standards are falling but what effective ways can be found to prepare students to cope with the ever-changing literacy demands of the modern world; and secondly, that in order to understand literacy development more fully there is a need to find comprehensive tools for describing, analysing and explaining the *actual* experiences of real students in relation to literacy. These constitute the essential challenge for this research.

Although constant reference is made to the “transition gap” and regression in pupil performance post-transfer, interpretation of the problem is inconsistent. Earlier studies attribute regression to the Y6 teachers’ greater familiarity with pupils’ achievement levels (Newsam Report, 1977, cited in Gorwood, 1986, p.7); pupil difficulties in adjusting to the unfamiliar teaching styles and organisation in Y7; and teacher classroom behaviour, particularly interaction with pupils (ORACLE project, Galton and Willcocks, 1983; N.Taylor, 1994, p.31). Some recent studies concerned with procedural and management issues mention continued difficulties since the introduction of the National Curriculum

(hereafter NC) (Herrington and Doyle, 1999, personal communication) and problems caused by “bad induction” and poor continuity and progression (Nicholls and Gardner, 1999, p.63). Other more experientially orientated studies suggest the apparent “regression” could be a product either of the “fresh start” approach where secondary teaching starts at level 3/4 for all pupils or of the cross-phase mismatch in understanding of NC levels (Schagen and Kerr, 1999, p.70). The sense of mismatch between pupil performance in primary and secondary schools influences both the experiential design of this study’s examination of whether changes in literacy practices are a contributory factor to pupil performance levels post- transfer, and other current work, such as the revisiting of the ORACLE project (Galton, Hargreaves, Comber and Wall, 1999; Hargreaves and Galton, in press).

Research by Littlefair (1991, pp.68-9), Millard (1994, p.109), Webster, Beveridge and Reed (1996) and Kress (1997, p.79) supports the notion of the changing place of literacy at KS3, highlighting the need for further research comparing cross-phase literacy practices. Edwards and Mercer (1986, p.74) express surprise at the slight attention accorded children’s language experiences throughout school, given concerns about primary-secondary transition and Hawkins (1984, p.4, cited in Fairclough, 1995, p.223) identifies the need to improve study skills in the “difficult transition from primary to secondary school language work”. Although researching literacy development in young pupils, Willes’ key question (1983, p.123) concerning how newcomers learn the rules is equally relevant to an examination of the continuities and discontinuities as Y6 pupils learn to become Y7. Knowledge of how these differences are manifested serves to identify implications for literacy development.

Since the commencement of this study, Government concern at regression post-KS2 has resulted in the commissioning of a “literature and effective practice review”. The ensuing report (DfEE, 1999a), using evidence from the revisiting

of the ORACLE project, is influential with respect to Government plans for intervention at KS3 (Gold, 2000; Cassidy, 2000), as are the experiences of the National Literacy Strategy (hereafter NLS) at the primary phase. Galton's report focuses attention on the effects of pupils' differing experiences of teaching and learning in the two phases - the prime focus of this study.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study contributes to three areas of research: two conceptual (classroom literacy practices and primary-secondary transition) and one methodological. A number of researchers, e.g. Green and Weade (1990, p.352), Meek (1996, p.167), and Raban (1991, p.53), have highlighted the need for research into classroom literacy practices. Bloome (1987, p.xvi) draws attention to how the roles, functions and ways of "doing literacy" which students have learned over time may set up preconceptions about literacy practices which are not attuned to the new expectations. Knowledge of the differences, thereby facilitating greater continuity, could aid transition.

How does this study contribute to classroom literacy research? Adopting the epistemological stance suggested by Barton and Hamilton (1998, pp.xiv-vi), it offers a detailed and specific description of the literacy practices locally in the four case study schools at a particular moment in time (the timing of the Y6 fieldwork prior to the introduction of the NLS fixes it historically). It also contributes to the theoretical understanding of literacy by demonstrating how the teacher and pupil informants make sense of their everyday school literacy practices. Much research into classroom literacy practices focuses on early years education and the beginning stages of learning to read and write, yet, as Barton (1996, p.56) points out, teenage literacies and the later stages of development are equally important. By offering detailed analysis of the literacy practices in each phase this study offers insights which could enhance teacher

awareness not only of the literacy practices in the other phase but also of pupil literacy practices, and thus has the potential to inform teaching and thereby ease transition.

Research of this nature contributes to the “general” body of knowledge about literacy and transition but also has the potential to develop informants’ knowledge and understanding. As relationships develop with teacher informants their concerns become apparent. Understanding of these provides important insights both for the researcher, aiding interpretation of the observed practices, and, perhaps more importantly, for the practitioners, who acclaim articulation of their beliefs about literacy and rationalisation of their practices as valuable professional development.

Through its adoption of a social constructionist viewpoint which encourages examination of the social practices which organise teaching and learning, of the social situations and interactions in which literacy practices are embedded (and thereby offering a grounded description of how literacy events are constituted within classroom instruction), this study endeavours to address the criticism of Willinsky (1990, p.82), Wyatt-Smith (1997, p.14) and Bloome (1987, p.xx) that researchers concentrate on the processing of text by individual students and thus lose sight of the social process. Bloome argues that if literacy is viewed as a shared set of ways of interacting with and interpreting text then it is appropriate to explore how people gain access to a literacy community. Following the advice of Green and Weade (1987, p.5) the study was therefore designed to take place over a period of time so that “pictures” could be developed of the interpersonal context of reading and of literacy practices within and across lessons, classes, teachers, phases and home-school settings.

The second major contribution of the study (discussed further in Chapter 2) is to the body of experiential research on primary-secondary transition. Its examination of “teaching strategies at the KS2/3 interface” fulfils one of the

research needs identified by DfEE (1999a, p.29), although the fieldwork pre-dates this identification.

The study also contributes to the field of methodology through its development of a new analytic framework for interpreting the literacy practices of the different phases from the perspectives of *What is literacy?*, *Whose literacy?* and *How is literacy developed?*. Discussion of how this framework evolved is situated in Chapter 4, while Chapters 5-7 demonstrate its use.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Thus the study is concerned with how school instruction defines literacy practices and focuses on the context of learning and the interactions occurring around text interpretation and production. It follows learners from phase to phase, subject to subject and teacher to teacher to explore the differing practices experienced. The research questions therefore need to account for the nature of both schooling and classroom learning (Bloome, 1987, p.xvii); to establish how knowledge is constructed by members of particular classrooms through their everyday discourses and social practices (Green and Dixon, 1994, p.232); and to identify the continuities and discontinuities in these practices. These issues are operationalised into three key research questions:

1. What literacy practices are characteristic of Y6?
2. What are the literacy practices encountered in Y7?
3. What are the continuities and discontinuities across phases?

*Chapter 2***Explorations of the Borderlands*****What are the issues in primary-secondary transition?***

What is known about the transition from primary to secondary school? What are the key concepts to be considered? Why is it an area of continuing interest and concern? What issues emerge from a study of the literature? An exploration of *Literacy at Transition* cannot be illuminated solely by examination of the literature of literacy, but also needs to draw on insights from the literature of transition in order to construct a sound theoretical framework for the study.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the literature of transition and to foreground relevant issues. A brief historical survey of the research into continuity and transfer, and the research methods used therein, is followed by examination of the major themes which have emerged: regression, liaison, transfer documentation, factors outside school control, curriculum continuity, cross-phase projects, planned discontinuity, differing curriculum models and pupil experiences. This information is then drawn upon to produce working definitions of the key terms (transition, transfer, continuity and progression). Finally there is discussion of the possible contribution of this study to the development of knowledge within the field of transition.

**“CONCERN ABOUT PRIMARY-SECONDARY
TRANSITION” -- SO WHAT’S NEW?**

Research and government interest in the “problem of transition” are not new phenomena, so why is another study justified? The literature of transition falls into two broad categories, “procedural” and “experiential”, with the former attracting the greater attention. (The categorisation used by Murdoch (1986,

pp.52-3) still seems apposite, although his term “technical” is here replaced by “procedural” as this seems to convey the function of the described activities more appropriately.) This “procedural” orientation is present in DfEE pronouncements, quantitative surveys and research into the processes of transfer, publications which focus on procedures for transferring pupils (e.g. SCAA, 1996) and the functions of processes such as assessment and record-keeping within these (e.g. Herrington and Doyle, 1997; Jones, 1995; Nicholls and Gardner, 1999). Whereas national and school priorities appear to lie at the heart of procedural studies, the “experiential” approach of case study and qualitative research reports (e.g. Measor and Woods, 1984; the ORACLE research, Galton and Willcocks, 1983; Hargreaves and Galton, in press) moves the focus to the experiences and effects of the transfer process on pupils. Aiming to illuminate pupil experiences of the continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices, the current study is situated in this smaller area of research.

The history of interest in continuity and transition, as evidenced by official reports, LEA documents, Schools’ Council publications, books and articles, is summarised by Derricott (1985, pp.1-11), Stillman and Maychell (1984, p.16), Nicholls and Gardner (1999, p.19), Tabor (1991, p.4) and Schagen and Kerr (1999, pp.2-4). Government interest dates from the Hadow Report (1926), which introduced transfer at age eleven, through the reports of Plowden (1967), Bullock (1975) and Cockcroft (1982) to the introduction of the NC (ERA, 1987). Since DES identification of primary-secondary transition as an area of weakness in the mid-1970s, many documents have featured transfer, liaison and continuity as aspects presenting difficulties. Initial optimism that the NC would “secure continuity and coherence” (DES, 1987) faded and by 1994 had been modified to “provide a framework for achieving continuity” (Gorwood, 1994, p.361). *Building Bridges* (QCA, 1998) accepted bridging projects and pupil tracking as valid Standards Fund expenditure but did not mention examining cross-phase practices. The present study seeks to establish whether enhancing teacher understanding of the nature of pupil prior learning experiences might

provide a valuable means of promoting continuity and thus offers the type of evidence called for in the most recent DfEE report (Research Report 131, 1999a), which foregrounds the need for attention to discontinuity in teaching approaches.

Despite the rhetoric concerning the need for effective cross-phase continuity, in reality there appears to have been little direct research. Gorwood (1986, p.51) and Schagen and Kerr (1999, p.3) argue that the notion of curriculum continuity presents as only a marginal feature within studies of other aspects of transfer. It appears that although the issue has been a recurrent one, emphasis has shifted between specific themes. Early research focused on selection processes, in the 1960s attention switched to the age of transfer, in the 1970s to pupil adjustment to secondary school (especially the contribution of middle schools), in the 1980s to curriculum continuity and in the 1990s to the procedural aspects of transfer documentation, liaison and cross-phase work.

Research projects since 1980 illustrate this shifting focus. Although each researcher claims to offer a new angle, the reality appears more oscillatory. Measor and Woods (1984), for example, suggest that prior to their research into the effects of the formal and informal curriculum on pupil social and emotional adjustment at transfer, the focus had been on teacher views rather than pupil experiences. Although Gorwood (1986) moved the focus back to national and school strategies for achieving curriculum continuity, Tabor (1991), examining continuity within particular curriculum areas through cross-phase work in English, re-introduced the pupil perspective. More recently Lee, Harris and Dickson (1995), looking at both in-school and cross-phase progression, moved the emphasis back to processes and procedures, concentrating again on links and the transfer of records, with little reference to issues of teaching and learning. This balance is somewhat redressed by a more recent NFER research report (Schagen and Kerr, 1999) which focuses explicitly on cross-phase liaison and curriculum continuity.

Examination of these research studies demonstrates how studies both reflect dominant contemporary concerns and employ the prevailing favoured research methods. Hence it is predictable, in an age preoccupied with school improvement, raising literacy levels, value-added and quantitative measures of achievement that DfEE pronouncements should stress the importance of the transfer of quantitative measures such as SATs levels. Since much transition research has involved surveys, using questionnaires which cannot take into account factors of style and quality of teaching, classroom interaction and the social climate of the school (Gorwood, 1986, p.74), there appears to be a place for a study which uses qualitative ethnographic measures, and insights drawn from the notion of language as social practice, to examine some of these features.

VISITING THE LANDMARKS

That much attention has been, and is still being, given to the issue of transition, implies that no real “solution” has been found. Possible reasons for this include the emergence of the main themes through government priorities rather than from the direct knowledge and concerns of the players on the field; failure to identify the true source of the continuing difficulty; that the preferred procedural solutions only effect surface change without addressing root causes or challenging invested interests; or that the two cultures are systematically resistant to change, continually reproducing themselves regardless of attempts to transform them. The following discussion briefly examines the sites that have aroused most interest, identifying issues informative for this study.

The *procedural sites* have attracted much attention, especially within government reports and government funded research. Success in this respect is

acknowledged by DfEE (1999b) (Executive Summary). It has been suggested that effective liaison between feeder and transfer schools offers the panacea but such statements ignore the administrative, logistical and communicative difficulties inherent in any such moves. Dialogue does not necessarily result in appropriate action or greater understanding.

The notion of liaison might presuppose attention to the three facets of administration, pastoral and curriculum (identified by Derricott, 1985, p.155), but this has not been the reality. By 1995 most LEAs had produced guidelines concerning transition policy and practice, transfer arrangements, and recording and reporting procedures. However, Lee, Harris and Dickson (p.18) found that, despite school recognition of the importance of continuity and progression, some LEAs felt that legislation relating to school organisation and increases in school autonomy actually militated against school collaboration. Schagen and Kerr (1999, p.5) endorse this in their reference to the number of research studies which reveal greater success with pastoral aspects of transfer than with continuity and progression in learning. Responsibility for the success of liaison initiatives is placed upon the headteacher and school management (Steed and Sudworth, 1985, p.32; Benyon, 1984, p.9). While appreciating the importance of the headteacher's procedural contribution to the creation of a climate fostering initiatives concerned with continuity, nevertheless it would seem that it is at the experiential level of classroom practice that real continuity can be achieved. There thus appears to be a place for studies, like this one, which focus on classroom experiences.

Transfer documentation is a further procedural issue which has attracted major interest. Transfer records have the attraction of offering tangible "evidence" that liaison is occurring and that the secondary school is ready to build on pupils' prior learning. However, the findings of two recent surveys of primary and secondary teachers' perceptions of transfer documentation (Herrington and

Doyle,1997; Schagen and Kerr,1999), show that there was no common agreement on what information should be included. This raises questions about the use made of these records and whether they do increase continuity of learning experience.

LEAs have encouraged the development of transfer records. Some followed the advice of the Bullock Report (1975), encouraging the sending of a pupil language profile and samples of work to the secondary school. Although a laudable aim, the resultant switch of attention from the discussion of English as a subject to a preoccupation with the logistics of transferring these records appears less commendable. Transfer records contain a wide range of information but SATs levels are the sole statutory item of inclusion (SCAA, 1996), perhaps further evidence of the DfEE's quantitative achievement focus. However, knowledge of a pupil's SAT level tells little of his/her real ability unless it is contextualised by teacher information (such as level descriptors and information about pupil learning styles, Jones (1995, p.45)) and understanding of the style of work and expectations of the other phase; an area this study attempts to address.

Teacher understanding of practice and trust in information emanating from the other phase is presented as one of the major barriers to securing continuity (Weston, Barrett and Jamison, 1992, p.198; Lance, 1994, p.46; Brown, Taggart, McCallum and Gipps, 1996; Marshall and Brindley, 1998, p.124; Schagen and Kerr, 1999, pp.39 and 61). Herrington and Doyle (1997) found that primary teachers spent hours on transfer records which were largely inaccessible to their colleagues. Marshall and Brindley (1998) explain this by reference to their findings that *primary and secondary teachers each operate with a different model of English*. QCA's call (1998, p.7) for a common understanding of NC levels shows awareness of the issue but fails to offer the necessary practical advice for developing such shared knowledge, an omission partly redressed by Schagen and Kerr (1999, pp.92-7). Observation of the same

pupils working in each phase (as in this case study) appears to offer an opportunity to reach better understanding of the differing practices and to learn how to interpret the information more effectively. Use of this knowledge in dialogue with teachers may serve to ease communication and enhance trust, at least in the case study schools.

Frequent reference to the concept of curriculum continuity might suggest a move to a more experiential focus, but major concern still lies with procedures and planning for continuity in curriculum content rather than with teaching and learning practices. The idea of continuity of curricular experience is a complex and multi-dimensional one and perhaps assumes more linear progression through subject topics than is actually the case. The very meaning of the term has altered with the introduction of the NC, which was expected to provide the “sequence of meaningful learning” necessary for curriculum continuity.

However, this did not occur as there was no legislation requiring schools to adopt particular kinds of curriculum organisation or teaching style, even though these are aspects which cause difficulties for pupils at times of transition (Gorwood, 1994, p.357). Despite this, SCAA (1996, p.13) continues to claim that focus on curriculum or assessment can promote continuity in learning across the Y6/7 divide. SCAA suggests that pupils can benefit from developing a better sense of the continuous nature of learning; from having previous experiences and achievements valued; and through experiencing appropriately challenging work which builds on the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired in the previous key stage. By using ethnographic methods of observation and interview this case study will seek to establish whether any of these elements are incorporated in the observed classroom practices.

Both school effectiveness research and Wray’s research into effective teaching of literacy at KS3 (1999, personal communication) support Herrington and Doyle’s suggestion (1997) that improvements in curriculum continuity can only

be effected through better practice and meetings in school time, not through more work for teachers. This notion is further supported by local experience of the National Literacy Project (KS3) where allowing teachers time for reflection on practice and cross-phase visits has made an effective contribution to cross-phase continuity and understanding. Hence the adoption of data collection methods in this study which give the researcher access to the lived experience of each phase.

Within discussion of curriculum continuity only passing mention is made of the importance of a knowledge of teaching and learning styles to ensure successful transition. Nicholson (1990, p.31), Jones and Jones (1992, p.12; 1993, p.47), Nicholls and Gardner (1999, p.93) and Schagen and Kerr (1999, pp.25 and 96) refer to the value of observation in the other phase. The last (p.97) even suggest an LEA role for this and highlight the value of cross-phase moderation.

Discontinuity in teaching methods or failure to become acquainted with practice in the other phase are described as key contributory factors to pupil difficulties at transition by Gorwood (1986, p.13), who subsequently emphasises (1994, p.358) the importance of knowledge of what and how pupils are taught. Further attention is drawn to this issue by Stables (1995, pp.160-161) in her case study descriptions of pupils' differing experiences of design and technology. She highlights the shift from autonomy and groupwork in Y6 to direction and individual work in Y7, suggesting that pupil skills are not built on in Y7 and that the two experiences are like learning completely different subjects. Another attempt to further the development of curriculum continuity was the recommendation for "bridging projects" (SCAA, 1996, p.14; QCA, 1998, p.6). Although subsequently introduced by many LEAs, procedural issues tend to override the experiential, possibly because the worked examples (SCAA, 1996) do not focus on the learning experience in either phase.

However, the DfEE has now adopted a different approach to the issue of continuity in teaching and learning. This is evidenced in two ways. First is the

NLS KS3 Training Programme (Summer 1999) which required LEAs to run a two day literacy conference for secondary teachers. Unlike the Primary NLS training LEAs were encouraged to differentiate and use local expertise, an opportunity which could be maximised by inviting Y6 teachers to talk with secondary colleagues. Is this the first time funding has been allocated to facilitate professional cross-phase discussion wherein not only are primary teachers placed in expert role, expected to inform secondary teachers of their literacy practices (focusing on experiences, outcomes and achievements), but also secondary teachers are expected to consider the implications for their own practice (and if they are hosting a DfEE Summer Literacy School to develop a KS3 intervention strategy building directly on primary practice)? Experience will show whether this proves a more effective means of ensuring continuity and progression. Whether this is an intentional strategy for tackling the age-old problem of continuity or researcher interpretation is open to question, but it appears to place on the public agenda the notion (adopted in this study) that continuity in literacy practices is an important factor in the transition process. This belief is reinforced by the second government action: the commissioning of research and introduction of a new KS3 pilot programme for September 2000 which includes a focus on literacy across the curriculum.

Arising from discussions of the value of curriculum continuity is the notion of “planned discontinuity”. This treats continuity as problematic, challenging the assumption that continuity is necessarily desirable and introducing the possibility that discontinuity in curricular provision is inevitable (Tickle, 1985, p.86). Tabor (1991, p.5) cites the Plowden Report (1967) to support his argument that discontinuity can even be beneficial; children can be stimulated by carefully planned novelty and change, including transfer to a new school:

“The challenge is to provide continuity of experience as a general goal, but to recognise those areas in which discontinuity is likely to be fruitful.” Derricott (1985, p.157)

This view is supported by Weston, Barrett and Jamison (1992, p.169) who suggest that planned discontinuity can play a role in stimulating growth and development and be an important aspect of curriculum provision, and by Stables (1995, p.168) who argues that even if discontinuity in teaching approach is seen as a necessary part of a pupil's progression, it must be based on a "fuller understanding by all teachers of each other's priorities and strategies". The problem lies with "unsystematic planning, repetition and unplanned discontinuity" which cause "either a decline in the rate of progress, or even a deterioration in many pupils' work" (Williams and Howley, 1989, p.62). This notion of planned discontinuity raises questions in the context of this study. The extent of continuity and discontinuity in both content and literacy practices will emerge from the data. Will it be possible to determine whether continuity in one aspect is more influential or important than the other? Can pupils cope with discontinuity in teaching and learning styles if there is continuity in content or does continuity of literacy practices enable pupils to access unfamiliar content? Pupil comment (in informant interviews) on the contribution of secondary textbooks to the improvement of their reading skills might support the introduction of new approaches.

Moving towards a more *experiential focus* (and to issues of more potential relevance to this study) discussions of differing curriculum models are encountered. Reference is made to the shift from the generalist teaching of the primary phase to the subject specialist teaching of secondary, from emphasis on learning to emphasis on teaching and from attention focused on the child to attention focused on the knowledge base and the subjects taught. There appears to be correlation here with the notion of the move from learning to read in the primary school to reading to learn in the secondary school (Webster, Beveridge and Reed, 1996; Meek, 1997), an issue which is investigated further in Chapters 3 and 7.

Attention is also drawn to the style of working deemed typical of each phase. The view of Jones (1995, p.45) that primary pupils are afforded more scope for autonomy in their learning is extended by Nicholls and Gardner (1999, p.17) who argue that the “time-bound secondary curriculum” forces the pace of learning, leaving little space for pupil choice in the nature or sequence of activities, and that secondary learning can offer a more varied experience because of the number of different teachers involved. Observation of the primary teacher teaching a number of subjects and of a range of secondary subject practices enables this claim to be tested.

Continuities and discontinuities in pupil learning experiences resulting from the differing curriculum models in each phase are amply illustrated by research which includes reference to English teaching (e.g. Galton and Willcocks, 1983; Tabor, 1991; Lee, Harris and Dickson, 1995) and History (Huggins and Knight, 1997, p.340-5). The most detailed appraisal (Marshall and Brindley, 1998, p.125) highlights the differences between the primary “literacy” skills-based curriculum, which focuses on literacy skills, creative writing, spelling and grammar, and the secondary “literature” curriculum where the emphasis is on response to literature, and suggests that the emphases of KS2 and KS3 SATs questions reinforce these competing models. Advice given by QCA (1998, p.8) concerning the type of information to pass between phases and what needs to be taught in English supports the skills model. Marshall and Brindley, claiming that the skills view of the subject dominates pupil perceptions and is usually the teacher’s key priority, believe that one explanation for the regression in pupil achievement may lie in the fact that pupils, coping with what essentially is a “new” subject, focus attention on content rather than on basic skills. They conclude that the isolation of these skills in the primary sector may not be effective in enabling pupils to transfer their skills across to the demands of the secondary curriculum. This evidence seems to point to the importance of a coherent, shared view of both the teaching approach and subject content if pupils are to make sense of their learning experiences, and further develops

issues raised within the discussion of planned discontinuity. This appears of particular relevance to this case study as pupil informants have been studied in Language or English lessons in each phase (the very names indicate a different orientation) and their perceptions of differences elicited. It will therefore be discussed in more detail within the analysis of findings, as will the notion that the different models are products of the differing cultures existing within each phase (Herrington and Doyle, 1997), and that this contrast in culture is a barrier to continuity (Lance, 1994, p.47).

, Within transition literature the final site, the experiential aspect of pupil experience, has received least attention. This may be because it does not lend itself to the favoured surveys and quantitative analysis, but rather requires longitudinal ethnographic study to elicit valid and reliable data. One study which focuses solely on pupil experience is that of Measor and Woods (1983) who examine pupil perceptions and experiences of transfer, in both the formal and informal curricula, at key points of transition. Another is Murdoch's case study (1986) which drew on van Gennep's notion of "rites of passage" (1909) as a framework for examining the degree of match between the culture of middle and upper schools, and so sought to collect data for each of the periods of "separation", "transition" and "adjustment". Both Measor and Woods and Murdoch are more concerned with the personal aspects of pupil adjustment and coping than with detailed analysis of learning experiences. This study seeks to illuminate the latter through examination of pupil perceptions of the changing intellectual demands and learning environments.

Analysis of pupil perception of the transition process reveals the individual nature of the process and therefore the danger of making generalisations. For example, Lee, Harris and Dickson (1995, p.65), Schagen and Kerr (1999, p.41) and this study discover the wide variety in pupil perceptions, some of which counter the "perceived wisdom" concerning the transition process. What one

pupil identifies as a difference another perceives as a continuity. Some refer to whole-class teaching in primary while others miss the peer support of groupwork. The ephemeral nature of pupil perception is illustrated by Marshall and Brindley (1998, p.128) who found that pupils gave different information about the Y6 experience at the start and end of Y7. They felt that these responses broadly reflected the models of English emerging from teacher surveys in each phase. Another interesting concept with respect to pupil perception is raised by Munn (1996), who, in a study of pre-school pupil self-perceptions of reading ability, discovered that after three months in school these pupils were more aware of their inability to read. This promotes questioning of the literacy self-concept of pupils before and after secondary transition and how this is affected by maturation. Is there a danger that their reported perceptions could lead the researcher to identify discontinuities erroneously? Triangulation of pupil, teacher and observer perspective may serve to redress this, but how important is the change in pupil perception? Perhaps it is the actual perception at each stage that counts, since anything perceived as a discontinuity may present the pupil with greater coping difficulties and therefore affect performance.

DEFINING THE TERRITORY

Each researcher and reader brings personal knowledge and understanding to the interpretation and reading of data and analysis. It is therefore important to make explicit researcher use of key terminology in the debate surrounding primary-secondary transfer. The four key concepts needing clarification are transition and transfer (which have often been used interchangeably in earlier research), continuity and progression.

Transition, here used with a personal experiential connotation, concerns the changes effected in pupils' lives by the teaching they receive and the

expectations made of them. Drawing on the notion of Youngman (1980, cited in Derricott, 1985, p.13) it encompasses situational (school characteristics), biographical (pupil characteristics), intellectual (ability and achievement) and dispositional factors (attitude and personality).

Transfer on the other hand is a procedural matter, referring to the physical displacement of the pupil from one school to another. It concerns issues of management and administration.

Continuity, defined by the Shorter Oxford Dictionary as “uninterrupted connection or succession”, is about curriculum content and subject methodology, the practices and experience of teaching and learning. It implies agreement about aims and objectives in subject teaching, assessment methods and understanding of the differing approaches to teaching in order to ensure coherence from the learner’s perspective (enabling continued construction of meaning from the experiences offered).

Progression concerns the continued development of pupil knowledge, understanding and achievement as a result of the way in which pupils experience the curriculum and progress through planned stages of learning.

CONTEXTUALISATION

How does this study fit into research on transition?

Although educational literature dealing with school transfer purports to place pupils at the centre of the discussion, showing concern for the difficulties they encounter in adjusting to the new form of schooling, in curriculum discussions it is the teacher who takes precedence, philosophies and processes that are discussed, and scant attention is given to the impact of the curriculum changes

on pupils, yet it is the pupils who experience the curriculum continuities and discontinuities. As long ago as 1986 Youngman (p.288) suggested:

“By far the most likely way ahead for improving transition is for the evidence of transfer to be described, interpreted, challenged and developed.”

Despite continued attention to the issue, its procedural emphasis led Weston, Barrett and Jamison (1992, p.77) to raise the question again, asking whether coherence in the learning process was receiving as much attention as “mapping” of programme coverage across the curriculum.

This study attempts to take up that challenge: to focus on experiential issues rather than add to the ever-growing body of procedural reports and pronouncements; to place pupils’ learning experiences centre stage, through examination of the continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices across secondary transfer; and to give equal voice to the perceptions of pupils and teachers as partners in this process.

*Chapter 3***Understanding Literacy Practices****What are the relevant issues raised by literacy research?**

The discussion of the literature of transition in the previous chapter foregrounded the need for experiential studies of primary-secondary transition. In the context of this study this means close analysis of pupil literacy experiences in the late primary and early secondary phases. This chapter therefore turns attention to the literature of “literacy research”, identifying relevant studies and issues which promote understanding of these literacy practices. The discussion imposes its own framework on this literature, drawing on a wide range of studies to synthesise those elements which relate to school literacy practices at primary-secondary transition.

What approaches can researchers adopt in their study of literacy in classrooms? How can the issues of classroom, cultural and social processes be framed to provide principled approaches to the study of literacy? The identification and interpretation of the literacy practices of each phase necessitates close examination of classroom learning (in the manner suggested by Bloome, 1987, p.xvii): looking at how instruction defines literacy events and practices -- who does what, with whom, when, where and how; the texts used and the social and communicative goals of literacy behaviour.

Central to this study (as explained in Chapter 1) is the sociocultural notion of “literacy as social practice”: that literacy is an essentially social activity; something which people do; something more than a set of skills to be learned; something which can only be fully understood in the context of the social practices in which it is acquired and used. The approach adopted is particularly influenced by two ethnographic studies of the literacy practices of specific communities. Although not sited in educational settings, their approach and

theoretical underpinning offer useful models for a study of classroom literacy practices. The first of these is the work of Heath (1983) which clearly demonstrates the effects of cultural and context specific literacy practices on educational success. The second is Barton and Hamilton's study of literacy practices in Lancaster, England. This latter, with its central argument that "literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; [which] can be inferred from events which are mediated by written texts" (1998, p.7), offers both methodological and conceptual insights.

Adoption of a sociocultural approach does not preclude examination of cognitive processes (for they are also socially constructed), but does offer a method to overcome some of the shortcomings of cognitive research which has fostered a view of literacy learning as a set of skills to be mastered outside curriculum subjects, and also resolves the problem caused by treating reading as a "hidden" mental activity. Literacy is a socially constructed phenomenon and the learning of literacy entails not only the acquisition of psychological skills, but more importantly the social process of demonstrating knowledgeability (Cook-Gumperz, 1986, pp.1-3). Language socialisation is important since the development of the pragmatic system (knowledge of how language is differentially used) enables the pupil to participate in the classroom language community as a communicating member (Hymes, 1974, p.75). This notion applies equally to the process of literacy socialisation, of adjustment, into the new literacy communities of the secondary school, which presents as an issue at primary-secondary transition.

Thus exploration of the continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices across secondary transfer here involves consideration of three themes which appear both to represent important areas of interest within current research into language and literacy and to be pertinent to examination of the continuities and discontinuities across settings. The first theme, *What is Literacy?*, looks at the theoretical perspective of different models and changing perspectives towards

literacy as a means to understanding the literacy practices observed in different settings. *Whose literacy?* then explores issues related to ownership, the language of instruction, language and power and the social contexts of literacy and how these impact on literacy development in each phase. Thirdly, current pedagogical theories are discussed, in *How is literacy developed?*, in order to offer a framework for examining the teaching and learning strategies observed within the literacy practices and their contribution to the continuities and discontinuities between phases. In this study the concepts of “what” and “how” relate to literacy practices not only to literacy pedagogy (as used by The New London Group, 2000).

WHAT IS LITERACY?

The concept of literacy is ever-changing and developing, with definitions differing according to the situation, the social and cultural experiences and the perspectives of the respondent. Therefore, in order to understand and interpret the literacy practices in the case study classrooms it is necessary to appreciate the range of models of literacy that might be operating there implicitly, not to be blinkered by the researcher’s own sociocultural standpoint.

Sensitivity is needed to the possible differing usages of the term literacy among the case study informants to ensure that researcher and respondent are using a “shared” language. Lankshear (1997) draws attention to the way even usage of the term “literacy” has altered. Formerly applied purely to the field of adult compensatory education and implying “illiteracy”, literacy is now used for school-based reading and writing (as in “The National Literacy Strategy”) and has become a priority for secondary subject teachers. However, this new usage reduces the status of “literacy” as a “critical” concept. Lankshear argues further (p.3) that these changing perspectives on literacy are reflected in the shifts in classroom practices from traditionalist approaches of drill and skill, phonics,

look-and-say etc., through progressive whole-language and process writing approaches to post-progressive approaches of genre, critical language awareness and multiliteracies. Literacy now is “a matter of social practices -- something to do with social, institutional and cultural relationships” (Gee et al., 1996, p.1, cited in Lankshear, 1997, p.2). Although this viewpoint offers a means of analysing and interpreting classroom practice, it may not reflect the understanding of all those engaged in the teaching and learning of literacy, as was found in the present study.

How does the notion of changing perspectives aid identification of the continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices? Kress (1997, p.xvi) argues the need for a dynamic theory of language, able to reflect the effect of everyday actions on language, concerned with the communicative competence of individuals as language makers rather than as language users adhering strictly to rules. Such a theory, while alerting the researcher to possible differences in pedagogical practice and teacher understanding of literacy, may represent an idealised rather than a realistic view of current classroom literacy practices and thereby foster an inappropriately judgemental stance on the observed practices.

Knowledge of how traditional, progressive or postprogressive perspectives may be enacted in classroom practice facilitates identification of the implicit models of literacy and thus of the continuities and discontinuities between the primary and secondary phases. If one phase offers a traditional, functional approach, concerned with quantitative measures of the decoding of decontextualised print, and the other a more progressive standpoint, concerned with qualitative analysis, meaning and social contexts (as in the What is Reading? debate epitomised by the stances of Turner (1994) and Stierer (1994)) such discontinuity could present as a contributory factor to pupil difficulties. However, even such an apparently clear-cut discontinuity could be blurred if the observed practices embody the more recent perspective (suggested by Wray, 1997, p.168) wherein even the exponents of these different reading approaches

are moving together as emphasis shifts to the multi-directional nature of the reader's approach to print.

Mills (1988, cited in Willinsky, 1990, pp.80-81) draws attention to another useful indicator for interpreting the observed practices with his suggestion that the focus has shifted from reading as a set of complex, inter-related cognitive skills to literacy as an equally diverse and intricate set of social skills. The extent to which the classrooms in either phase match his image of a community of readers with something to share and talk about, with a reason to read, or remain focused on a more individualised technical skills approach, provides further evidence for continuity or discontinuity in practices.

If every literacy programme (or initiative) has an underlying theory of language and of literacy (Barton, 1994, p.3), then a theoretical framework is needed which will illuminate the respective positions of the observed classrooms. Such a perspective is offered by the work of Brian Street (1984, 1993, 1994a, 1995, 1997). Identification of each class as representative of the autonomous or ideological models facilitates understanding of the literacy practices observed therein. Street (1994a and 1997) suggests that the dominant model of literacy in western culture has regarded literacy as a set of abstract skills involving detached analytical and individualised activity. Within this "autonomous model" literacy is believed to have consequences irrespective of context (1997, p.48) and is treated as a neutral technology; to become literate is to learn how to interpret and express decontextualised meaning (Auerbach, 1992, p.73). Related notions are Freire's "banking model", concerned with skills, decontextualised sounds, words and texts, with teacher knowledge transmitted directly to the learner (1972, pp.46-7); and its conceptualisation as 2-dimensional (the "descriptive view" of Ivanic and Moss, 1991, pp.195-8) and as passive or "secretarial" (Frowe, 1999, p.19). Literacy takes central place in many classroom activities and its use for formal learning produces a distinct "school" literacy (different from home literacy practices) (Barton and Hamilton,

1998, p.282); but only where it is focused on as an object of study, is explicitly taught and talked about as an unchanging set of skills and rules do the practices lie within the autonomous model.

The autonomous model thus offers potential for description of classrooms where the pedagogical style is didactic and the focus is on the explicit teaching of literacy, but does not encompass those in which literacy is used as a tool to construct knowledge and “get things done”. Street’s work, however, offers a second viewpoint in his notion of the “ideological model” which acknowledges the social and ideological embeddedness of literacy (i.e. that literacy is shaped by the values and practices of the culture in which it is embedded), examines meanings and usage within particular contexts, and recognises literacy as being tied up with personal identity, relationships and power. Kress (1997, p.114) supports Street’s analysis, considering the autonomous system of literacy (as static skills) no longer acceptable since it precludes language being treated as social, historical and dynamic.

What does the term “ideology” imply for classroom practices? Street and Street (1991, pp.162-3) argue that in the ideological model of literacy “ideology” is used not simply in the “sense of ‘ideas about’ language but in the stronger sense that encompasses the relationship between the individual and the social institution and the mediation of the relationship through sign systems” and that participation in the language of an institution positions the language user. (This argument is developed further in *Whose literacy?*.) Street (1993, p.7) believes that exponents of the ideological model avoid the reification of literacy inherent within the autonomous model and study social practices, rather than “literacy-in-itself”, for their relationships to other aspects of social life. Other researchers support and extend this notion: Gee (1990, p.xx) regards literacy as a “socially-contested term”; and Ivanic (1998, p.61) relates it to Fairclough’s notion of “institutional and societal context” and Halliday’s “context of culture”. The ideological model therefore offers insights into the observed practices of

learners both inside and outside the classroom, especially into classrooms where awareness of the cultural embeddedness of literacy underlies the practices, where oral and written language complement each other, and where literacy involves shared meaning making through interaction around text, discussion prior to writing and the valuing of pupils' existing language and literacy practices. Such classrooms operate from the ecological stance wherein literacy is something undertaken to fulfil social or learning goals rather than an object of instruction for its own sake as in the autonomous model.

Street's argument thus foregrounds how each teacher operates, often implicitly, within a particular model of literacy, but does not address issues of potential tension where teacher personal style and belief conflict with national or institutional expectations. Frequently, especially if adhering to government guidelines, literacy must be delivered as a neatly packaged set of skills, irrespective of meaningfulness or accessibility to the recipients. The impending introduction of the NLS (at the time of the Y6 fieldwork), with its prescriptive focus on text-types, structure and grammar, and the involvement of the main study secondary school in the National Literacy Project KS3 produces just such tension and suggests further possibilities of continuity or discontinuity to anticipate within the observed literacy practices. It is therefore important to look, not only at how literacy affects people, but, more importantly, at "how people affect literacy"; at the uses which pupils, in each phase, make of the skills which are imparted and how these impact on and affect their own developing worlds of literacy.

There is a wide range of ideological standpoints which teachers may adopt and which may affect the continuity and discontinuity in literacy practices. Thus analysis of these literacy practices must take account of whether the teacher has adopted specific ideological standpoints, such as those identified by Auerbach (1992, p.73) (context-specific, learner-centred, content politicisation and critical social analysis), and whether these in turn offer as great a straitjacket as the

functional autonomous model or present key features of continuity and discontinuity, thereby affecting cross-phase literacy development. Auerbach's critique of the autonomous model both heightens awareness of implicit beliefs which may still underpin and impact on classroom practice and aids identification of themes for analysing the observed practices. She argues that ethnographic studies such as Heath (1983) demonstrate that literacy is not unitary and universal; that Scribner and Cole's work with the Vai (1981) proves that literacy does not always produce higher level cognitive processing; that literacy does not necessarily promote economic advancement (Graff (1994) for instance shows that it can be race and gender, not literacy, which shape economic possibilities); and that the model is not ideologically neutral since both Graff (1994) and Cook-Gumperz (1986) illustrate how literacy presents as an instrument of domination. This theme is explored in *Whose Literacy?*.

Other relevant ideological standpoints include Frowe's "intermediate constitutive model" (1999, p.20), which offers pertinent description of classroom communities engaged in "constructing knowledge together"; and Unsworth's suggestion (1993, pp.vii-viii) that pupil access to the linguistic systems of different learning areas is a function of their position in the social system. Within the ideological model context and meaning are central. Fairclough's three-layer model of language (1989) aids identification of contextual continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices (autonomous or ideological in orientation) through the examination of textual, interpretational and situational contexts, but fails to discriminate between the three types of meaning which Kress (1997, p.132) believes a fully functioning system of communication should convey: propositional, interpersonal and (con)textual.

A further perspective relevant to the study of literacy practices in the multi-ethnic schools of this case study is that of multiliteracies. In these classrooms where distinct literacies co-exist it is informative to draw on the notions that literacy is patterned by the wider social practices and values of society

(Hamilton, Barton and Ivanic, 1994, p.x); that the meanings and definitions of a text or literacy activity depend on the social and cultural context of the situation, its historical context, intrapersonal and interpersonal contexts, and variations within and across events (Bloome and Green, 1992, p.50); and that literacy is multiple and demands different forms of communication (Rockhill, 1993, p.164). Although such theory serves to focus observation and foregrounds possible themes for continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices, it is not sensitive to the extent to which pedagogy is affected by teacher awareness of these competing literacies.

McLaren (1988, cited in E825, p.95) identifies three literacy positions which aid description of classroom literacy ethos. While the first two of these, the functional and the cultural, correspond to Street's autonomous and ideological models respectively, the notion of critical literacy, with its concern for self-directed learning, empowerment and the role of education in influencing (or controlling) literacy practices, introduces an extra dimension. Although the concept of critical literacy (explained in detail by Auerbach, 1992; Fairclough, 1989 and 1995; Kress, 1990; and Lankshear, 1997) appears to offer a useful means of examining and analysing classroom practice, given the current governmental focus on literacy as a set of skills to be learned, it seems unlikely that the observed teachers would voice explicitly the ideas of critical language study in their own definitions of literacy or demonstrate awareness of such issues within their pedagogical literacy practices.

Defining literacy: the theoretical perspective

Examination of the different models and theoretical perspectives on literacy still leaves the overriding question: What is literacy? A definition is needed which offers a wide view of literacy encompassing the notions of functional, cultural and critical literacy discussed above. Literacy is more than the four language

modes of reading, writing, speaking and listening and involves the practices in which those processes are embedded. The definition needs to combine notions of social practice, context, meaning, usage, power relationships and empowerment and to reflect the idea of text as more than the written word (as stressed by Lankshear, 1997; and Kress, 1997 and 2000). No one extant definition seems apposite so a working definition has been developed for this study. *This combines and extends the definitions offered by Scribner and Cole (1981, p.236), Luke (1993b, pp.10-11) and Wells and Chang-Wells (1992, p.147).*

Literacy is:

a set of socially organised practices which make use of a symbol system and a technology for producing and disseminating it. Literacy is not simply knowing how to engage appropriately with texts of different forms (including spoken discourse and the moving image) and types, or learning how to make sense with the lexicogrammatical patterns of textual language, but also entails learning a schema for what literacy is (how to use it, when, where and to what possible ends), and applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use in order to empower action, thinking and feeling in the context of purposeful social activity. The nature of these practices determines the kinds of skills and consequences associated with literacy.

This definition represents the researcher's understanding of literacy and is designed to encompass and facilitate interpretation of the wide range of practices encountered. It does not represent the definition or model of any individual informant.

Also central to this study is the concept of literacy practices. Barton and Hamilton (1998, pp.13-14) suggest that the notions of "literacy practices" and "literacy events" come from different intellectual traditions with consequent tension possible in combining them. In this study, however, the understanding of literacy practices is assisted by close observation and interpretation of the

literacy events. Literacy events (as originally introduced by Heath, 1983) deal with the empirical and observable while literacy practices (originating from the work of Scribner and Cole, 1981; and Street, 1984) are more abstract, inferred from events and other cultural information. Ivanic (1998, p.65) defines literacy practices as activities and behaviour associated with written texts, reflecting “values, patterns of privileging and purposes in social contexts i.e. literacy practices are the culturally shaped ways in which literacy events serve social ends.”

Thus within the context of this study **literacy practices** are:

the responses of each classroom literacy community to particular demands involving the production and interpretation of some form of text. Some of these literacy practices are context specific (such as completing an RE self-assessment profile) while others (such as brainstorming and extracting relevant information) are employed frequently in different contexts. Such practices develop from active decisions concerning discourse choices, feelings and attitudes to different literacy activities, as well as from mental processes and strategies; are determined by the power relations and dominant language of the classroom ethos; and shape and are shaped by the individual literate identities of the participants.

Knowledge of these literacy practices is partly inferred through close observation of the literacy events, including the ways in which oral and written language are intertwined, the centrality of different language modes, the place of and attitude towards texts and the literate relationships -- the main issue for discussion in the following section.

WHOSE LITERACY?

The notion that there are different understandings and models of what literacy is and that literacy practices are culturally influenced and socially and context specific (see Chapter 1) raises the question of *whose literacy* practices determine the literacy practices of each classroom. Every classroom constitutes a different literacy community where each of the participants has developed a different concept of literacy as a result of their personal experiences of meaning making and a different set of literacy practices influenced by their cultural, social and institutional literacy experiences. The fact that these understandings are implicit means that participants may not make allowance for these differences so in each setting literacy is redefined or negotiated within the parameters allowed by the dominant participants. Every occasion of speaking, listening, reading or writing is a social occasion in which participants need to be aware of the rules (Kress, 1997, p.16). Understanding of “whose literacy” and the identification of continuities and discontinuities therein in the case study classrooms is informed by consideration of issues foregrounded in current literacy research concerning the social context of language use; language and power; the dominant language and influence of the language of instruction; roles, relationships and positioning; and literacy as social identity. Each of these is discussed in turn.

Heath’s 1983 study of literacy in Trackton, Roadville and Maintown, which raised awareness of the influence of the social context of language use, of the extent to which the literacy practices of one community can be overlooked and devalued by another, provides insights into the situation at primary-secondary transition, directing attention to examination of individual interpretation of literacy as evidenced through discourse and practices and to the possible mismatch between teacher and pupil understanding of what a particular literacy task entails.

Although theoretically pupils are moving within the same education system and continuing to follow the NC (designed to foster continuity and progression), in reality the secondary school offers a new culture in which (as discussed in Chapter 2) teachers are unfamiliar with the literacy practices of the primary phase and pupil literacy skills can be misunderstood. In the primary phase pupils are taught “to read”, through classroom literacy events they learn a selective tradition of how to do things with texts. If, as cross-cultural research demonstrates, students in different classrooms (or even different groups within the same classroom) do not have equal access to the same model of reading (Green and Weade, 1990, p.232) and different teachers facilitate different student competences, (for example, reading may be memorisation, literal recall, explanation of textual meanings, reconstruction of narrative or demonstration of enjoyment (Freebody, Luke and Gilbert, 1991, pp.436-8)), then the extent of mismatch between pupils’ situated understanding of “reading” (or writing) and the secondary school interpretation needs identifying in order to establish whether it represents an important discontinuity in cross-phase literacy practices. Government priorities may ignore such findings and focus on “how best to teach literacy”, but this research seeks to build on such notions. It is more concerned with considering how literacy practices and positions are interactively built and privileged in classrooms by the particular instructional activities. Its aim is to develop better understanding of how literacy learning and teaching is shaped by the context of each classroom; and to establish any common features or effects and whether knowledge of continuities and discontinuities in these differing practices might better support literacy development and ease problems of transition.

Important to discussion of “whose literacy” is the notion of language and power. If, as Barton and Hamilton (1998, p.283) argue, literacies are “embedded in the social relationships that give them their meaning”, it is necessary to establish what these social relationships are within classroom

literacy practices and what power dimensions they embody: who is able to make decisions, confer value, demonstrate expertise and determine the appropriate language or response to text. The implications of such power relations are made explicit by Bearne (1999, p.11), who argues that the ways literacy opportunities are presented in schools can create divisions and exclude some pupils from the chance to control their own literacy. Are these power relationships differentially enacted in each phase, and, if so, how can they be identified?

Fairclough's *Critical Discourse Analysis* (1989, 1992, 1995) offers an approach to the study of language which centres around notions of language and power and control and focuses on discourse as the unit of analysis. His theory transcends examination of everyday literacy practices (such as teacher and pupil examining a text to explain cause and effect) to consider both the influence of the social institutions (schools) in which they occur and the broader ideological context, attempting to incorporate the dynamics of the particular social contexts in which the practices exist. He highlights how the social order of schools is reinforced by the situations in which discourse occurs and in which the discourse types of the classroom set up subject positions for teachers and pupils (1989, p.38), arguing that it is only by "occupying" these positions that one becomes a teacher or a pupil and suggesting that it is the teacher who selects the form of language to be used in a learning situation, who decides what is valid "knowledge" for the learner to experience and who dominates the interactions and literacy experiences through these choices. If teachers in each phase exercise this dominance in different ways, resultant differences in the literacy practices could be apparent.

How does teacher language achieve the status of dominant language? If Street (1994a, pp.142-3) is correct that the dominant literacy is often presented as the one standard literacy, the first feature to establish is whether (and what) linguistic variation is acceptable in each setting. Christie (1988, p.30) and

Duranti (1992, p.78) suggest further that empowerment comes through linguistic choices; so the second aspect to identify is how teacher and pupil lexical choice determine the power relationship within the observed literacy practices and how teacher linguistic choice gives cues to expected behaviour or restricts pupils' roles and actions. Careful documentation of the place accorded to student literacy reveals differences and commonalities.

Kress (1990, p.86) provides further elucidation of the interaction of language and power in educational situations, arguing that the discourse of reading and literacy tuition, the choice of reader etc., serve to ensure teacher dominance, that the true power lies with text choice and how text is handled. This suggests that examination of the parameters surrounding text selection and whose practices determine text usage could aid identification of differences between settings. In each setting exploration of the role of the teacher as "authoritative language user" in the classroom (Wyatt-Smith, 1997, p.8) determines which textual features are privileged: linguistic characteristics or the relationships between texts and their cultural or social contexts. Such knowledge contributes to deeper understanding of differences in practices, as does observation of how texts are handled (the practices surrounding the reading and meaning making and the scope for student participation).

Kress argues further that it is the teacher who orchestrates the performance, controlling the lesson content, sequence of interaction and level of pupil participation; the teacher whose language dominates, formulating the questions and commands, setting the scene, validating and accepting information (1989, p.24). However, examination of these features provides only one side of the picture. Also needed is evidence of pupil response: whether pupils are "playing the game", supporting or contributing to teacher authority, or whether the confidence with which they use their own language and literacy practices constitutes a challenge. Are the teachers politically motivated, deliberately intending to engender particular attitudes toward and behaviours with text (as

Luke (1988, p.150) suggests), or is the way in which teacher discourse shapes and constrains what pupils learn to do with text simply an unconscious product of their own literacy practices?

This dichotomy can be exemplified by consideration of how questions feature within the literacy practices. Not only are there differences in who asks questions (whether it is teacher prerogative), but also in their style and function. It is important to balance the perspectives of different researchers to interpret how questions contribute to the power relationship. For example, whereas Fairclough views closed questions as a method for establishing and reinforcing teacher authority, Edwards and Mercer (1986, p.197) suggest that pseudo, closed and test questions both offer a means of involving pupils in the learning and provide more effective instruction. Interpretation of questions therefore relies on analysis of the discourse and context in which they are embedded; the words in isolation are open to misinterpretation. Cross-phase discontinuity in the style and function of questions within the literacy practices could present a source of confusion for pupils.

In addition, Haworth (1999) argues that whole-class instruction, in which conventional IRF routines construct pupils as respondents, privileges teacher-directed information and literacy practices (p.101), whereas instances of small-group interaction offer opportunities for more dialogic interaction, fostering the intermediary discourses which help pupils connect more confidently with the formal discourses of instruction (p.115). This notion suggests that pupils accustomed to small-group interaction during literacy events may encounter difficulty transferring to the whole-class instructional approach characteristic of secondary literacy practices but does not explain the role of interaction between teacher and individual pupil during the independent work phase characteristic of many secondary lessons.

Subsumed within the notions of language and power, dominant language and the effects of the language of instruction on literacy practices is the concept of positioning: a concern with the roles and relationships occupied by the participants in literacy practices. Reference has already been made to Fairclough's suggestions (1989, p.38) that the nature of classroom discussion sets up subject positions for teachers and pupils, but what does this imply and how is it relevant to a study of cross-phase continuities and discontinuities? For Wells (1983, cited in Edwards and Mercer, 1986, pp.175-6) it is a matter of the relationship between the literacy task, the type of educational talk and the positions which teacher and pupils adopt while pursuing this activity. For example, the "master-apprentice" situation offers a very different role and understanding of literacy practices to those developed through open-ended tasks. Different literacy practices thus position participants differently in social space (Street, 1994b, pp.15-16) and identification of the different roles and relationships, of the rules and rights of participants in each literacy activity and of the social hierarchy and relationships among participants and their roles in the learning process (Gutierrez, 1994, p.339), both aids interpretation of the underlying beliefs about literacy and reveals differences.

A range of labels and descriptors is needed to characterise these positions. Heras' description (1994, pp.291-294) of teacher roles as "moderator", supporter of the "academic and social context of knowledge generation" and "legitimator of the student's right to challenge", with pupils cast as respondents, challengers, questioners and historians, offers a starting point for the development of such descriptors. Other potentially useful labels are found in Freebody and Luke's description (1990, p.7) of reader roles (code breaker, text participant, text user and text analyst) which may be constructed by the teacher during the act of reading. Another potentially useful role label is that of "teacher as text mediator" (Luke, Fraser and Luke, 1989, p.252; Martin, 1999, p.40). This notion, drawing attention to the text as a locus of information exchange where teacher text mediation determines what counts as an appropriate reading,

underlines the importance of analysing how textual encounters are structured, but does not facilitate understanding of what pupils actually do or of the possible interaction between their own and the teacher's (differing) literacy practices. Writing tasks also position the teacher as the authoritative language user. Landy (1990, p.23, cited in Bearne, 1999, p.109), arguing that pupils get a clear message about their writing from teacher marking, foregrounds the influential role of "teacher as examiner". The dominance of teacher literacy practices in a classroom where teacher presents as the sole audience for pupil writing could be quite different from one where pupils customarily write for a variety of audiences. Individual researchers tend to offer a limited number of different labels (often no more than one or two) depending on their focus and theoretical orientation, but not a full categorisation. To encapsulate the range of roles and positionings constructed within different styles of literacy practice, a comprehensive taxonomy is needed.

Differences in roles and positionings can also be explained by notions of the asymmetrical power relations within classroom learning situations in which participants engage with literacy practices in different (and often unequal) ways (cf. Reder and Wiklund's "practice engagement theory" (1993, cited in Barton and Hamilton, 1998, p.17) and Collins' reference (1987, p.74) to the way in which classroom discourse is characterised by the power and knowledge asymmetries of the IRF sequence).

Teacher literacy practices may dominate but is it only teacher literacy that is valued within the classroom? The research of Sola and Bennett (1994) and of Street (1994b) demonstrates that literacy is part of one's social identity and needs to be respected within the literacy practices of the educational institution, while Wray (1994, p.3) claims that the NC (DES, 1989, 6.6) assumes that language is central to individual and cultural identity. The relationship between literacy and social identity involves both home and school literacy practices. If,

as Barton (1996, p.58) suggests, home and school literacies are not accorded equal status, the way in which school literacy practices draw on and value the literacy practices of the home, community and previous school will affect social identity. The importance of home literacy to effective school literacy is now acknowledged by the UK government and the Basic Skills Agency supports "Family Literacy" projects. Establishing whether teachers in either phase demonstrate understanding of home literacies and utilise them within their own literacy practices offers further evidence of continuity and discontinuity.

What evidence is of value to illustrate how social identity is constructed within classrooms and whether the literacy practices of the two phases affect this differently? Fairclough's discussion of language and identity (1992, chapter 5) can be used to raise questions about how classroom conversations affect students' identities as readers and writers. Some case study research (e.g. Phillips, 1994, cited in E825, p.63; Gregory, 1994; and Jones, 1986 and 1991, cited in Lankshear, 1997) illustrates how school literacy practices affect pupils and pupils take individually from the literacy experiences offered to them, using them to develop their own literacy practices, as with the *sub rosa discourse* described by Sola and Bennett (1994, p.134).

What is the relationship between social identity and literacy practices? Postmodernist belief is that each participant in discourse brings different knowledge and understanding as a result of the literacy practices s/he has been involved in. For example, Graddol (1994, p.19) argues that utterances and texts have no single, unproblematical meaning and that different hearers or readers will respond to a text differently according to their ideological states and previous world experiences. Similarly different researchers may interpret observed practices differently according to their own previous experience and beliefs. Useful terms to express this notion are Fairclough's "Members' Resources" (MR) and Hall's "reader's attitudes" (1994, pp.209-11). Fairclough argues (1989, p.24) that MR are both cognitive and social, are socially

transmitted and unequally distributed, comprise knowledge of language, values, beliefs and assumptions. He suggests that the only way to understand a participant's MR is "to get inside their heads", a problematic issue for the researcher, especially regarding bias and subjectivity, yet an important area to explore in an attempt to understand particular learning situations and establish "participants' knowledge" (Hanks, 1992, p.45). Not only is it important to recognise how participants' knowledge differs but Fairclough's notion foregrounds the value of examining the extent of teacher awareness of this individual difference and how this in turn affects the literacy practices of each setting.

All these notions represent postmodernist belief that meaning is jointly produced and negotiated in the light of audience response. Establishing whether this belief is shared by the teacher informants reveals further differences and commonalities. Bakhtin (1981, pp.293-4) suggests that language only "becomes one's own" when the reader/hearer has the opportunity to make the text his/her own, while Christie (1989, p.x) argues that empowerment derives from the ability to use literacy to achieve important personal and social goals. How often are pupils accorded the opportunity to "find a voice" and develop their literacy through literacy practices which permit participation in a "set of social and intellectual processes" (Robinson, 1987, cited in Bloome, 1987, p.351) that "extends the student's range of meaning and connection" (Willinsky, 1990, p.8), or are they still positioned within a functional teaching approach, and does this vary across phase?

HOW IS LITERACY DEVELOPED?

Knowledge of the variety of literacy models and definitions and cognisance of the postmodernist perspective concerning the multiplicity of meanings and positions within discourse (as discussed above) leads to the central question of

how literacy is developed within the case study classrooms. Pedagogical research offers many relevant themes to interpret the observed practices. After initial consideration of the relationship between pedagogical approaches and understandings of literacy, discussion focuses on the development of “common knowledge”, genre theory and the importance of talk in educational settings; themes which both encapsulate current research interests and represent potential areas for cross-phase differences. Pivotal to these themes are the concepts of scaffolding (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976, p.90) and metacognition.

One characterisation of the difference between primary and secondary literacy practices is that of a move from learning to read to reading to learn (Meek, 1997). Is the reality, as evidenced in the case study classrooms, this simplistic? Is Littlefair (1991, p.61) correct in suggesting that after the teaching of higher order reading skills in the primary school, only pupils deemed to be experiencing reading difficulties receive further direct reading teaching after transfer?

There is a symbiotic relationship between the view of literacy as a means to get something done or as an object of study (Barton, 1996, p.52) (discussed above) and the pedagogical approach to how literacy is developed; thus examination of how the pedagogical approach creates the literacy practices and of the underlying beliefs about literacy are mutually informative. Although it is unlikely that the literacy practices of any one classroom will lie neatly within any one approach, awareness of the orientation of different pedagogical strategies (see discussion of “changing perspectives” above) offers an important means of characterising the continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices between phases.

Much research has focused on the teaching of reading, especially in the early years, and arguments abound concerning the relative merits of top-down and

bottom-up, skills-based or meaning-focused approaches. Although these different pedagogical approaches are drawn on to interpret and build thick description of the observed practices, the arguments are not reiterated here. (See Oakhill and Beard (1999) for a detailed examination of the issues.)

However, three notions present as of particular relevance to a study of continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices across primary-secondary transition. Firstly that different literacy teaching regimes foreground different skills and these typify reading and writing at particular stages of schooling. Macken-Horarik (1998, p.74) suggests that emphasis moves from focus on sound-letter correspondence and handwriting, through recognition of the correct meaning of a text and production of “appropriate” response, to questioning and critiquing the dubious messages of text. Whilst her hypothesis is acceptable, her typification seems too broad and general to encapsulate the differences at transition, with the second stage offering a potential descriptor of literacy teaching throughout schooling, and the final two representing orientations to literacy rather than factors purely related to maturation. This study of cross-phase differences needs more fine-tuned distinctions.

The second notion offers a contrasting viewpoint, suggesting that curricular materials are like a musical score, influencing reading instruction through their organisation, level of difficulty and content (Barr, 1987, p.150). If this hypothesis is correct it is to be expected that the nature of reading instruction will change as pupils move from the traditional primary focus on narrative and fiction (pre NLS) to the secondary school textbook; but is this the reality? Are there significant differences in the text forms, their influence and usage, and if so is it the materials, pupil stage of development or pedagogical approach which is the major source of differences in literacy practices?

The third notion concerns the pedagogical approach to writing. Langer and Applebee (1987, p.101) offer a deterministic viewpoint, arguing that different

kinds of writing activities lead to different types of learning. This implies that the method of teaching writing and the place of writing within the literacy practices will affect a pupil's understanding of writing, but fails to incorporate the notions of the influence of curricular materials or the pupil's stage of development. It is the relationship between the three aspects (the teaching approach, nature of materials and pupil development and knowledge) that determines the literacy practices of each setting, and therefore to foreground differences it is necessary not only to identify the elements but, more importantly, to examine their interaction.

Why have certain pedagogical themes been selected as important to the study of cross-phase differences? The concepts of "common knowledge" and the development of groundrules (Edwards and Mercer, 1987) and MR (discussed above) aid understanding of classroom literacy interactions. Any classroom interaction or learning situation has rules which participants need to respect and negotiate in order to reach a successful learning outcome, or to develop an understanding of the schooled concept of literacy. Pupils transferring to a new setting must quickly learn the groundrules of subject classrooms, an important feature of the continuities and discontinuities in cross-phase literacy practices. Observation of the initial meeting between subject teacher and Y7 class aids interpretation of later observations when the groundrules have become implicit. Researcher familiarity (through Y6 fieldwork) with Y6 literacy practices and pupil informants' understanding of literacy facilitates the foregrounding of differences arising from discontinuities in groundrules and how pupils' MR affect their response to the new situation. It could be argued that "common knowledge" is an element of MR, being one of the resources at a "literate's" disposal to enable successful participation in a literacy event, or meaningful interpretation of a text. The value of the concept of MR to an examination of literacy development is that it draws attention to the possible differing ways that

pupils will take from a literacy interaction or event according to their own literate identity, whereas teachers often assume a single “correct” response.

Current research into pedagogical strategies draws heavily on Bruner’s notion of scaffolding and the handover of knowledge. Mercer (1995, pp.73-5) suggests that the theory’s principal value is to draw attention to “the construction of knowledge as a joint achievement” between teacher and learner, to learning and teaching as social transaction (as Wells and Chang-Wells (1992, p.29) term it). It is informative to establish whether Vygotskian theory of guiding the learner underpins the literacy practices observed in either phase, and how far the pedagogical approach aims to create a community of literate thinkers and independent self-motivated learners (especially given the mismatch between NLS statements concerning the value of scaffolding and the didactic approach of many of the suggested activities). Some teachers may intuitively offer a *Scaffolded Reading Experience* (Graves and Graves, 1995) without conscious knowledge of the framework, while others remain locked in traditional or progressive approaches offering pre-packaged knowledge or unguided exploration. Identification of such cross-phase differences and their impact on the literacy practices of each setting is facilitated by drawing on the notions of challenge and control in learning (Wells and Chang-Wells, 1992, p.81) and Langer and Applebee’s five components of effective instructional scaffolding (ownership, appropriateness, support, collaboration and internalisation) (1987, pp.141-5) since these foreground features that evidence the teacher’s approach and orientation. However, both studies focus on the teacher-pupil relationship without considering the role of peer relationships within the learning situation and their contribution to the evolving literacy practices.

Another related concept is the notion of contextualisation. Edwards and Mercer (1986, p.172) suggest that in classrooms the context and continuity of discourse constitutes the development of shared knowledge. It is illuminating to see how this is developed over time and how far different teachers attempt to activate

prior knowledge. Secondary teachers, lacking a history of shared literacy experiences, are initially unable to invoke the primary teachers' level of contextualisation cues to aid the pupil in making sense of new learning. Contextualisation in the early years of secondary schooling entails either encouraging pupils to foreground relevant knowledge and experience through general reference to "schooled" literacy practices or starting afresh (as government reports suggest is common practice).

The notion of common knowledge and groundrules is shared by genre theorists. Martin, Christie and Rothery (1994) build on Halliday's functional linguistics to argue that the basic differences between spoken and written language need to be explicitly taught. Genre pedagogy is based on three main principles: that language development involves using language, learning through language and learning about language; that systemic functional linguistics offers a powerful tool for developing language; and that teachers should assume the position of authoritative language user, initiating pupils into knowledge, understanding and use of the different text types. This issue is particularly relevant to the case study schools since the optional LEA "Transition Module", newly introduced at the time of the main Y6 fieldwork, is premised on a genre approach, but only introduces recount text forms in the primary section. The Y6 teacher was unfamiliar with the genre approach and this lay uneasily alongside her usual literacy practices. Awareness of, and pedagogical confidence in delivering, genre-based teaching are therefore issues within discontinuity in literacy practices. Primary pupils accustomed to process style writing may find the discontinuity afforded by a genre-focused secondary curriculum difficult to adjust to. Czerniewska (1992, p.143) argues that students used to the process approach need explicit teaching of the "groundrules" of the writing curriculum before they can master the styles and structures which teachers implicitly expect. Does such teaching occur in either phase? Martin (1993, p.144) draws attention to the narrow range of writing undertaken in process writing

classrooms, thereby suggesting that if primary practice is characterised by a process approach pupils may be inadequately prepared for the range of texts required by secondary subjects.

Both Gilbert (1994) and Sheeran and Barnes (1991) question whether genres really empower students. Barrs (1994, p.257) argues that although genre is an important idea for it focuses attention on the “big shapes” and how children can learn these, its attempt to codify these and teach rules of usage could reimpose a more “functional” straitjacket, constraining rather than extending the quality of response. Both genre and process writing approaches are also criticised for turning writing into a “recipe”, eliminating its organic, fluid nature and detracting from its contribution to meaning making and the shaping and development of thought and knowledge. The growing popularity of writing frames (the aspect of genre theory most readily adopted by secondary teachers) is a pertinent case since these present problems to some pupils. Thus it is not only teacher awareness of genre that can provide continuity or discontinuity but how it fits within their pedagogical style; whether it involves all three facets of learning language, through language and about language; and whether pupils are guided through any or all of the four stages (identified by Martin, 1993, p.165) of negotiating the field, demonstrating the relevant genres, and joint, then independent, text construction.

Underlying genre theory, subsumed within the idea of groundrules and part of the critical literacy debate, is the concept of metacognition. Martin, Christie and Rothery (1994) and Wyatt-Smith (1997, p.8) suggest that teachers need linguistic awareness if pupils are to handle genre theory, while research into the relationships between literacy and cognition suggests that talk about text is as important as the skills of reading and writing in developing literacy skills (Olson and Astington, 1990, p.706). The use of metacognitive strategies in either phase thus presents as another potential area for continuity or discontinuity. If

Unsworth (1997, p.30) is correct that “one of the literacy challenges that faces children as they progress through schooling is learning to control the distinctive grammatical features and text structure of the language that constructs and communicates knowledge in specialised curriculum areas” it might be expected that genre theory and metacognitive strategies are more common within the secondary phase.

A pedagogical approach which foregrounds the importance of metacognition is the EXIT model (Wray and Lewis, 1997). Based on Vygotskian principles, this model offers insights into the learning process (pp.18-20) which mesh neatly with models of literacy discussed earlier: that learning is a process of interaction between what is known and what is to be learnt, is socially situated and is a metacognitive process. It also stresses the centrality of talk in the development of literacy skills. This model not only encapsulates both social and cognitive views of learning in its theoretical framework but also offers practical pedagogical strategies. As use of this model of literacy development is encouraged by the LEA KS3 Literacy Project its approach and strategies are more likely to be present in the case study classrooms of the Y7 main study. However, given that the model emphasises explicit literacy tuition, although the specific strategies may be unfamiliar to the secondary students, its use may not present as a major source of difficulty at transition.

A further issue of interest concerns the place of talk within the literacy practices of each phase. New Literacy researchers have strengthened the place of oral language in the classroom by treating it as an exploratory tool of enquiry (Willinsky, 1990, p.151). Reading is no longer seen as a solitary activity, meaning is created through the interactions around text. The social constructivist view of learning places interactions and the social context of learning at the heart of the learning process and therefore central to literacy development. Thus analysis of the discourse strategies used by teachers to

structure interactions around text serves to demonstrate both the nature of and how textual meanings are created within the respective literacy practices. Mercer (1995) and Fisher (1994), reporting on the SLANT Project, illustrate how emergent neo-Vygotskian theory can be used to explain how talk functions to “guide the construction of knowledge”, both teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil. Whereas their typification of disputational, cumulative and exploratory talk offers descriptors focusing attention on the nature of pupil talk, the notion that there are three different classroom scripts (recitation, responsive and responsive/collaborative) which define social practice and shape writing pedagogy (Gutierrez, 1994, pp.339-344) switches attention to the teacher, *managerial or orchestrational role*. Taken together the frameworks offer complementary tools for analysing the role of interaction within the literacy practices, the former affording greater insight into small group interaction and the latter into whole-class instruction.

The study is therefore informed by a number of key issues within current educational research. Throughout the investigation the researcher’s notion of literacy has to be sufficiently broad to incorporate not only the four modes of language use but also the social practices in which they are embedded. The findings and experiences of ethnographers are drawn on to examine the literacy practices within their social context, and of social constructionists to investigate whether students’ thinking and literacy skill development is bound to specific contexts of social practice. Knowledge of a variety of models of literacy aids description of the observed practices and the framing of questions to informants to validate interpretations (in Chapter 5). Interaction around text is viewed as a main source of evidence for continuity and discontinuity in literacy practices as it permits examination of how language and power, the social context of language use, the dominant language and language of instruction, and roles, relationships and positionings interact to create the literacy community (Chapter 6). Finally pedagogical research into Vygotskian principles, genre theory and

metacognition are used to inform the analysis of teaching and learning practices (Chapter 7). However, before examination of the findings, consideration is given (Chapter 4) to the methodology adopted to research these issues.

*Chapter 4***Researching *Literacy at Transition***

Discussion of the literature (of transition and of literacy) has both foregrounded the theoretical framework underlying the research questions and demonstrated their relevance and validity. Such identification merely sets the stage. Having problematised the issue, the focus of attention switches to consideration of methodological issues. How were the research questions operationalised and investigated? What procedures were adopted and what factors influenced their choice as methods capable of illuminating the issues in a valid and reliable manner?

This chapter opens with an exploration of the research traditions which could illuminate the issues effectively, thereby establishing the theoretical framework for the research design. This is followed by explanation of the resultant research design: the case, the data collection methods and the analytical framework. Finally there is discussion and reflection on the methodology, a critique of the design and the research tools, with suggestions for improvement.

SITUATING THE RESEARCH - Defining the theoretical framework

A research design was needed which would enable identification of the continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices between primary and secondary schooling. Personal belief (shared with Scott and Usher, 1996, p.1 and Barton and Hamilton, 1998, p.57) in the close relationship between epistemology, methodology and practice (that methodology needs to reflect the

researcher's understanding of literacy) led to the search for a research tradition appropriate to the detailed examination required by a social theory of literacy. Should the study be quantitative, qualitative or draw on both traditions? Quantitative methods, emphasising the experimental and numerical, do not attune with the belief that literacy practices are contextualised in time and space and can only be understood through analysis of literacy "as it is lived" by "real" pupils and teachers. The use of survey or questionnaire, amenable to both quantitative and qualitative analysis, might elicit some perceptions of differences in literacy practices, but lack the shared understanding between informants and researcher that facilitates interpretation. Pupils might lack the experience to respond to written questions at other than a superficial level, researcher ignorance of the practices might lead to inappropriate or poorly framed questions and limited teacher awareness of practice in the other phase (see Chapter 2) could offer misleading data.

A qualitative research focus on natural settings, interest in meanings, emphasis on process and use of inductive analysis and grounded theory (Woods, 1999, p.2) seemed to offer an appropriate framework to combine the literacy theories espoused and personal preference for research methods. The research design, as a qualitative case study treating students and teachers as informants rather than as subjects, follows the developing tradition of the "New Literacy" researchers (Willinsky, 1990, p.164). Interpretation of lessons, of pedagogical approach and understanding of teacher expectations are sought from the informants (as in Langer and Applebee's study, 1987, p.12) in an interpretative study of the practices that contextualise literacy processes.

Drawing on the developing research tradition which links ethnographic study, classroom literacy research and sociocultural literacy theory (e.g. Heath, 1983; Gee, 1990; and Knobel, 1996, p.123), it seemed appropriate to design a study incorporating the four aspects of ethnographic research identified by Goetz and LeCompte (1984, p.3). The study would take place in real classrooms (not

examine decontextualised texts or stage specific activities). It would be holistic, studying the cultural artefact of literacy practices in Y6 and Y7 classrooms; multi-method, using observation, interview, journal and analysis of texts used or created; and interpretative in its representation of participants' perceptions, using their words and discussing the data and its interpretation with them.

The study also draws on the research traditions of sociolinguistics (with its focus on how everyday classroom events are related to social structures), ethnomethodology (the study of language in use) and literary theory (which places the reader in central role to determine textual meaning); traditions which share a common focus in their systematic exploration of the everyday events of classroom life, as constructed by the language participants use during social interactions (Green and Weade, 1987, pp.4-5). From the social interaction perspective classrooms are regarded as communicative environments in which lessons, at multiple levels of context, are constructed during interaction between teacher, students and text. Both ethnomethodologists and discourse analysts stress the asymmetry of classroom speech exchanges (highlighted by Fairclough, 1989) and show how analysis of turns at talk reveals the structural significance of teacher-pupil interaction sequences and how pupils have to work to interpret teacher questions in order to produce acceptable answers (Edwards and Mercer, 1987). Ethnographies of communication (such as Heath's study (1983)) attempt to show how people are socialised as talkers, readers and writers. They are valuable because they reveal not only how factors at home and school influence the processes of becoming literate (Paris and Wixson, 1987, p.36) but also teacher beliefs about literacy (Baker, 1991, p.161). Detailed description of what happens to pupils in each phase, as they learn to use literacy and form values about its structures and functions, shows how literacy practices socialise them as readers and writers and how the differences affect their development.

The term ethnography has two uses: firstly to describe a method of research based on work in the field and secondly as the name for a written product (Atkinson (1992, p. 5) reminds us that the word “ethnography” means the writing of culture). Both uses seemed relevant in that illumination of the research questions was to be sought in the field and the final product would be an ethnographic account. This choice was further supported by Wolcott’s belief (1995, p.24) that “ethnography” is not a label, but rather a commitment to provide a “cultural account” for the actions of an individual or group. However, ethnography is not “the magic solution” to researching literacy (Street, 1995, p.52). Equally important is the theoretical clarity, the conscious questioning approach, needed to ensure that the empirical investigation of literacy does not merely reproduce researcher prejudices.

There are therefore strong arguments supporting the suitability of ethnography as the general methodological approach for this research. However, ethnography has not been immune from criticism. Moreover, its nature is subject to constant change (Denzin, 1997, pp.xi and 15-19) and different researchers / readers accord it different meanings (Barton and Hamilton, 1998, p.58). Care has therefore been taken to make the researcher’s interpretation of ethnography within the context of this study as transparent as possible. Much criticism of ethnography as a research method has been concerned with whether it is appropriately scientific (Hammersley, 1998, p.8; Atkinson, 1992, p.3), with such criticisms reflecting the dominant research and cultural preoccupations of the time. Earlier criticisms of ethnography’s insufficiently scientific nature (of being imprecise, impressionistic and subjective; of not being generalisable, replicable or able to identify causal relations (Hammersley, 1994, pp.7-9)) failed to appreciate not only the different purposes underlying experimental and ethnographic research but also how the processes of triangulation, and the depth and longitudinal nature of such studies, could mitigate against the perceived shortcomings and how quantification could be equally misleading. More recently, however, proponents of the opposing viewpoint, that

ethnography is *too* scientific, criticise it for its failure to break more sharply from the paradigm of natural science, for its commitment to explaining the social world rather than seeking to change it, for its exploitation of the people studied and for its incapacity to represent social reality “in its own terms” (Hammersley, 1998, pp.11-14). These arguments are influenced by postmodern and feminist beliefs with respect to conceptions of reality (discussed below) and issues of relationships of authority and power.

Criticisms that ethnography is unscientific may have declined, with acceptance that qualitative research has its own logic and validity criteria. However, further criticisms have arisen among ethnographers, partly due to internal diversification of approach. One such criticism concerns issues of representation. Hammersley (1992, p.2 and p.4) questions the extent to which an ethnographic account can claim to represent an independent social reality while van Maanen (1995, p.2) cites a range of such criticisms: over-reliance on “unquestioned cultural conceits”(Boon, 1982), unwarranted claims of objectivity (Rosaldo, 1989) and “inevitable but treacherous subjectivity” (Clifford, 1988). Such criticisms reflect movement away from the former realist conception of validity. Another criticism focuses on the relationship between research and practice (Hammersley, 1992, p.2 and p.6), questioning whether researchers (as opposed to practitioners) should conduct research, what the purpose of ethnographic research is and whether its findings are used to inform practice. As with all forms of research it is the political climate and process of dissemination which determines the extent to which a study’s claims and conclusions are heeded. Perhaps the question of who conducts the research is resolvable, as in this study, through the combination of researcher experience within the substantive field (literacy education within schools) with unfamiliarity within the precise context, thereby enabling an outsider view which “makes the familiar strange”. Ethnographic explanations are also criticised for their assumptions and pragmatic and value-based selection of explanatory factors. However, since the write-up of any research undertaking is necessarily selective

and reflects researcher beliefs, this is not a criticism of ethnography alone and can possibly be overcome by a stance of subtle realism (Hammersley, 1992, p. 52) which requires extra vigilance for potential bias due to cultural assumptions. The final areas of dispute and criticism concern issues of research design such as credibility, comparability, translatability, internal and external reliability and internal and external validity (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982, pp. 31-60) and methods of data collection and analysis, including structured or semi-structured data collection methods, participant or non-participant observation and deductive or inductive analysis (Scott, 1996, pp. 143-4). While such criticisms suggest internal inconsistency of approach, this is not necessarily undesirable. There needs to be appreciation that each study is unique and that the researcher should be free to select data collection and analysis instruments appropriate to context and purpose, not be constrained by a rigid pre-ordained "recipe" for the conduct of ethnographic research. The following explanation of the research design and discussion of the effectiveness of the methodology demonstrate how these criticisms of ethnography have been addressed within the contexts of this research.

Where can the study be situated within the ethnographic tradition? The research design reflects three fundamental assumptions distinctive to ethnography (Hammersley, 1998, pp. 8-9). It is naturalistic in that it is situated in natural settings: 7T had Geography at 10.00 every Thursday, following the same syllabus and using the same materials, irrespective of researcher presence. Non-participant observation was considered desirable both to reduce reactivity and facilitate contextualisation of the social events witnessed. However, to develop deeper understanding of the cultural perspectives on which actions were based, it was necessary to adopt a more participant role during "individual" work time, engaging pupils in informal conversation which afforded greater insight than a formal interview schedule. Finally the study was concerned with discovery. Although premised on the notion that understanding of the cross-phase differences in literacy practices might aid identification of strategies to ease

transition, there was no predetermined, detailed hypothesis as to what these differences might be, the study aiming to build rather than to test theory (Layder, 1993, p.50). It was considered important to enter the field with as open a mind as possible and to sharpen focus to consider specific aspects of literacy as relevant issues emerged. Thus the main themes of *What is literacy?*, *Whose literacy?* and *How is literacy developed?* emerged to offer the all-embracing framework into which could be slotted the more fine-tuned sub-themes, roles, subject positions within and metaphors for the literacy practices; the aspects which aided deeper understanding and offered a different way of describing what it means to “do literacy” in Y6 and Y7. Given that ethnographic studies demonstrating changes between Y6 and Y7 are rare (Green and Dixon, 1994, p.232) the design also fills a gap in the literature.

The importance attached to understanding the literacy practices as lived experience suggested the need for a realistic portrayal, yet ethnographers are criticised for claiming to represent reality (Hammersley, 1998, p.16) and contemporary belief that accounts are relativist rather than realist renders the production of a completely objective, impartial and authoritative account problematic. Ethnography has had to change because the world which it confronts has changed (Denzin, 1997, p.xii) and is now described as “the discourse of the postmodern world” (Tyler, 1986, p.123, cited in Woods, 1999, p.5). Accepting theoretical influence on observation, the impossibility of definitive description and the possible misleading nature of the researcher’s account, and believing that explanation involves more than the stating of regularities (as in a positivist model), this study adopts a standpoint fitting Cameron’s description of realism (1992, p.10). The world portrayed is a construction of the researcher, one interpretation of what has been observed and experienced, and therefore no more valid than other grounded accounts. It is axiomatic within the postmodern turn that knowledge in the text is not independent of the author: what the researcher knows and understands can only be a partial picture. This knowledge is demonstrated by the shift of research

focus from an emphasis on “getting things right” to a desire to depict the observed practices in a way which is “differently contoured and nuanced” (Richardson, 1994, p.521, cited in Woods, 1999, p.5). In this study this is embodied in the attempt to write an account which makes the familiar strange..

Does the study sit easily within the postmodern tradition? It is not positivist in orientation, consciously eschewing the use of quantitative experimental methods or qualitative approaches which suggest the data are fixed and unchanging, but does epitomise some features of postpositivism in its acceptance of the need for validity criteria, its aim to produce findings which may be generalisable to other settings and its attempts to be internally reflexive (Hammersley, 1992, p.64). With its sensitivity to the textual and contextual effects of research settings, to the observer-observed relationship, to point of view, to the place of the audience (reader) in textual interpretation and to the issue of authorial or rhetorical style in text production (Altheide and Johnson, 1994, cited in Denzin, 1997, p.20), the developing postmodern canon appears to describe the study’s development. The choice is further supported by Manning’s suggestion (1995, p.251) that such texts embody the very characteristics needed to illuminate literacy practices: explicitly detailed, informative fieldnotes; a clear perspective; attention to the roles of causality and prediction in explanations, to time and space, to the genre of reporting and to the use of imagery and metaphor to portray and explicate the findings.

Focus on social practices, concern with interpretation, meaning and illumination rather than prediction and control and the assumption that the teacher and pupil actions which create the literacy practices are meaningful and should therefore be interpreted within the context of the social practices suggest that a hermeneutic-interpretive epistemological approach is more appropriate than a positive-empiricist one. Furthermore Gilbert’s review (1992, pp.37-8) of approaches to contextual explanation in ethnographic research raised questions as to how an understanding of the broader social contexts of the institution,

home and community could be incorporated into analysis of the observed classroom events and practices. The outcome of this dilemma was to adopt an emic perspective, focusing prime attention on the constructions of participants within the intensive context (the sites of study) but drawing on the extensive context where appropriate to explain the external factors impinging on these classroom literacy practices.

Finally consideration was given to researcher voice and style of write-up. It was clear that neither narrative, concerned primarily with description, nor a logico-scientific account, offered the required depth of interpretation. Preferable would be an interpretative categorically organised account, with extensive exemplification from the database; a hybrid account with space for straight analysis, some “confession” with respect to the conduct of the research, and multiple voices emanating from informant interviews; postmodernist in orientation but not a truly “messy” or experimental account. A theory-building structure, reordering the events in a thematic account, with carefully juxtaposed reconstructions and contrasts, was considered more effective for foregrounding the paradigmatic relationships than a straight chronologically organised narrative which focused on syntagmatic diachronic relationships (Atkinson, 1990, p.126). With respect to reflexivity the text needed to be transparent, permitting the reader insight into its construction; postmodernism has drawn attention to the way in which the textual form mediates the researcher’s view of reality (Scott, 1996, pp.153-4) and in which “ethnographic presence” may reveal itself through style of organisational structure, layering or choice of examples (Atkinson, 1992, p.5; Wolcott, 1995, p.88).

CRAFTING THE STUDY - Research design

How was this theoretical framework translated into practice? This section aims to make explicit the methods used and the decisions taken in the course of the research, to explain both how and why it was conducted in particular ways.

SETTING

The study was conducted in four inner city schools: two comprehensive schools and the main feeder primary school for each. Some pupils from the pilot primary school attend both secondary schools. Situated in an area of social and economic deprivation many students (in all four schools) experience difficulties with literacy development, with 85-90% registering a reading age two or more years below chronological age on entry to secondary education.

THE CASES

The study was designed to be conducted in three distinct phases: a pilot study in one primary school, an initial study of Y7 practices in one comprehensive, and the main study, set in the other two schools. Each phase was designed to build on the experiences of the previous phase and to contribute to the final database. Appendix A gives an overview of the settings, research design, fieldwork and evidence database.

The pilot study, conducted during Summer Term 1996, entailed examination of the literacy practices within English lessons in one Y5/6 classroom of the main feeder primary school for the comprehensive school in which the initial study was situated. (At this stage it was envisaged that this secondary school would also be the site of the main study.) The initial aim to focus on Humanities lessons in both phases proved impossible as none was timetabled for this term.

The pilot was designed to make two important contributions to the research: firstly to obtain baseline data about Y6 practices, to test the hypothesis that there were differences in the strategies and expectations of teachers in different phases and that development of common understanding might ease transfer; and secondly to establish the validity of classroom observation, (specifically non-participant observation using unstructured fieldnotes), as a methodological tool

for collecting relevant data about literacy practices and to develop researcher skills in this respect.

The initial study, examining Y7 literacy practices, was situated in the comprehensive school where the researcher taught. Designed as a small case study, using students observed during the pilot study as key informants, it comprised three distinct data collection stages: firstly, semi-structured interviews with the three pupil informants to ascertain student perceptions of continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices across phase; secondly, classroom observations of some History and Geography lessons attended by these students; finally, focused discussions with pupils and teachers for respondent validation, eliciting perceptions of the literacy practices embedded within their teaching style and also satisfying issues of accountability as the teachers had requested feedback.

The initial study was designed to make a four-fold contribution in preparation for the main study:

1. Methodological: to refine the researcher's skills in data collection during interviews and observation; establish the most effective form of observation (participant or non-participant); develop appropriate interview schedules; and to identify areas of focus for observation.
2. Analytical: to analyse the data using different analytic frameworks in order to determine or develop the most useful method of describing and explaining the observed phenomena.
3. To discuss wider issues raised by the methodology and locate them in the relevant literature.
4. Topic verification: to establish that continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices are a real issue for concern with respect to pupil learning.

The main study comprised two main data collection stages. Firstly, during summer term 1998, a mixed ability Y6 class, selected because it contained the

most pupils (ten) transferring to the target secondary school, was observed during Language, Mathematics, Library and “topic” lessons, taught by the class teacher. Interestingly, as in the pilot primary, no History nor Geography were scheduled for this term, the “topic” (the “Transition Module”) being a language study. Key informants were the ten pupils (seven girls and three boys) transferring to the secondary site.

The second stage took place during the Autumn and Spring Terms 1998-9 in a comprehensive of approximately 600 pupils. Observations were conducted in four subjects: English, Geography, History and RE. This choice was influenced by several factors: placement of pupil informants across four forms; limited researcher time, necessitating observation sessions of two-three consecutive lessons; and finally, maintenance of curriculum consistency through observation of the same subjects. It proved possible to observe three forms (containing eight of the original pupil informants) in four subjects, focusing principally on a different subject for each form, but allowing for observation of two different RE and English teachers. Three groups were selected in order to observe both boys and girls, with the group of informants extended to include four boys from other primary schools, primarily to redress the gender balance but also to give a better ethnic and ability spread. The six subject teachers willingly agreed to lesson observations and to become informants.

INFORMATION GATHERING - DATA COLLECTION METHODS

A. Primary data -

Three main methods of primary data collection were used (see Appendix A for further detail):

1. Classroom Observation: the principal method of data collection.

- Non-participant and participant observation of lessons containing pupil informants.
- Observations recorded in open-ended, unstructured fieldnotes.
- Closer observation of group/paired working where relevant, focusing on informants.
- Notes written up with observation and commentary in parallel columns.
- Brief informal discussion with teachers after lessons, wherever possible.

2. Interviews: conducted at different stages and for varying purposes. All interviews were written up in the two column format of transcription and comment.

a) Initial study:

- (i) Semi-structured interviews to elicit information from three Y7 pupils concerning perceptions of cross-phase differences in literacy practices and ways their own literacy practices had altered since transfer.
 - Pupil informants were members of the Y5/6 pilot study class to ensure shared frame of reference.
 - Interview schedule reflected the key research questions: literacy experiences in Y6 and Y7, differences between phases and literacy practices outside school.
 - Thirty minute interviews held in researcher's office during lessons, with subject teachers' agreement.
 - Project outlined and pupil willingness to participate and permission for writing notes obtained before the interviews commenced.
- (ii) Focused interviews with pupil informants after the classroom observations for respondent validation.
- (iii) Focused interviews with the three subject teachers after the classroom observations to discuss their literacy practices, perceptions of how pupil literacy affects their teaching practices and to permit respondent validation and triangulation of the differing perceptions.

b) Main study:

- (i) Focused group interviews with Y6 pupils after observations to elicit pupil perceptions of their literacy practices at home and school and for respondent validation through discussion of shared lesson experiences.
- (ii) Semi-structured group interviews with Y7 informants (October 1998) to ascertain initial perceptions of literacy experiences in Y7 and differences from Y6 practices. Discussion grounded in shared experience of Y6 and Y7 lessons.
- (iii) Group discussion with all Y7 informants (November 1998) to establish their perceptions of items to record in the one week Literacy Log.
- (iv) Individual focused interviews to discuss items recorded in Literacy Logs and exploring personal literacy practices outside school.
- (v) Individual focused interviews with six Y7 informants (February-March) to discuss shared lesson experiences, literacy habits at home and at school and to establish whether their perceptions of primary practice and personal practices had altered.
- (vi) Semi-structured interviews with four teacher informants (April-May) after completion of observations, inviting personal reflection on practice, respondent validation and also permitting triangulation of the differing perspectives. Topics discussed included their reflection on observed practices, perceptions of their responsibility for and contribution to the development of pupil literacy and their own understanding of literacy.

3. Research Journal:

- Used to record reflections, ideas, impressions, possible links to the literature and suggestions for further development.
- Comments made both on the research process and on data collected.

B. Secondary data -

In order to contextualise and aid interpretation of the data collected through observation, discussion and reflection on experiences in the field, a

supplementary database of texts and documents was collected (see Appendix A).

SEARCHING FOR PATTERNS - Constructing the analytical framework and analysing the data

How were the data to be used? Qualitative research studies using observation and interview as data collection strategies produce a huge amount of data. The use of unstructured fieldnotes, although allowing unforeseen, but relevant, issues to emerge, does not ensure appropriate illumination of the research questions unless, as Croll (1986) advises, to ensure that relevant data are collected, the researcher has determined the method of analysis before entering the field.

The analytic framework needed to be flexible to match the open-ended data collection strategy. A predetermined deductive framework incorporating identified themes could have blinkered the data collection, so an inductive approach concerned with the development of theory grounded in the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) was adopted. Barton and Hamilton (1998, p.68) suggest that grounded theory is an epistemological stance which encourages constant movement between data and theory; close attention to words, actions and context; facilitates researcher reflexivity; and is constantly evolving and open to adaptation or re-definition. As the following description demonstrates, the analytic framework that evolved (see Appendix B for an overview) incorporates many of the “key features” of Ritchie and Spencer’s “Framework” (1994, pp.176-7) in that it is driven by observation and the original accounts of the informants; is dynamic, with amendments throughout the analytic process; and is systematic and comprehensive, allowing for methodical treatment of all the data. It also facilitated retrieval of original textual material and comparison

between sites; and is rendered accessible to other researchers by description of the creative process.

The pilot and initial studies were used to test the viability of this approach. After each observation fieldnotes were written up with an accompanying commentary and reflection on emerging methodological and conceptual issues. The main units of analysis were the teachers (their words, actions and expectations), the pupils (their reactions and skills) and the texts: an emic approach to exploring the insiders' view of the world (Wolcott, 1995, p.97). With the research questions as the orienting literacy theory, content analysis and progressive focusing were used in the initial "searching" phase (Charmaz, 1994, p.99) to identify themes for subsequent observations and to refine ideas and perceptions. The second (focused) stage of data analysis consisted of further content analysis, theory generation and identification of major themes linked to the literature. This process resulted in the emergence of three themes grounded in the data: *What is literacy?* *Whose literacy?* and *How is literacy developed?* These themes became the orienting theory for the main study. Appendices E and F, which provide evidence of both substantive and analytical data, illustrate the complementary nature of the commentary and analytic process.

The analytic process thus became a constant spiral of reading and re-reading fieldnotes and transcripts, annotating, coding, selecting, developing theories, returning to the data, re-reading and testing the hypothesised themes; all the while interspersed with reading the literature and relating literacy theories to the emergent themes; each stage building on theories emerging from the previous one. The constant movement between data and literature makes explicit how the data relates to the broader picture and enriches the final account. Starting from case specific description "the threads of literacy practices" can be traced into the wider context of cultural, social and historical practice.

By the end of the Y6 Main Study a number of sub-themes e.g. “Literacy as meaning maker” had emerged within the theme of *What is literacy?* and there was exploration of the notions of roles, networks and values for *Whose literacy?*. Insufficiently differentiating, lacking sensitivity to the different subject positions, these were subsequently abandoned. During writing of commentary alongside Y7 fieldnotes certain labels e.g. “Literacy through subject learning” regularly recurred and so the sub-themes for *How is literacy developed?* were born.

Were these themes sufficiently encompassing to account for the main features and illuminate the question of differences in Y6/7 literacy practices? Atkinson’s argument (1992, p.13) that an all-embracing model is not necessary, that it is unusual to find a framework which encompasses all the data offers some reassurance, as does Woods’ suggestion (1999, pp.31-32) that no master framework exists for categorical organisation, category validity only confirmable by tests of adequacy. Generated from the data, rather than superimposed from another study, the identified categories were relevant to the research topic. The structure of three main themes with sub-themes within each and sub-divisions within some of these represented analysis on equivalent levels, using the same criteria.

To establish that the categories were exhaustive and mutually exclusive and to continue the search for sub-themes for *Whose literacy?* necessitated another round of content analysis and progressive focusing. All fieldnote and interview transcripts were re-read again, given a discrete reference and coded according to existing or emergent sub-themes e.g. “Literacy as control”. The production of a “key” to the informants and each observation/interview facilitated the collation of examples for each theme/sub-theme onto large diagrams (a form of concept map), thereby making it (relatively) easy to locate appropriate examples for each point. By the end of this process the sub-themes for *Whose literacy?* had also been identified and coded. A new way of looking at familiar

practices had emerged, making it possible to write a “thick description” (interpretation of the multiple levels and kinds of meaning in the observed culture and related to relevant literature) of the cross-phase continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices. Despite apparent mutual exclusiveness, an interesting correlation appeared between sub-themes in *What is literacy?* and *How is literacy developed?*, perhaps strengthening their validity by foregrounding the relationship between a teacher’s understanding and teaching of literacy.

It is important to recognise that the resultant “thick description” offers only one interpretation, one version of the observational data. This account reflects the writer’s selection of extracts to illustrate the points made within the word constraints for this report, even the “full ethnography” (the more detailed initial version) could only offer a selection from the wealth of collected data; another researcher, using the same themes, might make a different selection and therefore produce a different vision or picture (Jackson, 1995, p.63). Would the informants recognise this portrayal of their world? At what stage do informant words become researcher words (Barton and Hamilton, 1998, p.72)? An ethnographic account embeds data extracts within authorial comment and thematic organisation, so the literacy practices are interpreted and given meaning by me, as researcher and writer, and reconstructed (perhaps differently) by each reader.

In both the pilot and initial studies Webster, Beveridge and Reed’s four-quadrant model (1996) was used to determine literacy teaching and learning style. Although effective for the pilot teacher it was less satisfactory for cross-phase comparison, neither distinguishing continuities and discontinuities effectively nor demonstrating the depth of insight offered by the data. It was therefore abandoned in favour of the framework emerging from progressive focusing and content analysis; a framework which by its very nature was more closely representative and more widely encompassing of the observed practices.

Similarly the key linkage chart produced to represent the literacy practices in the initial study Geography classrooms was also found artificial and insufficiently illuminating for the purpose of this study.

The idea of using Hutson's framework of reader-text-task interaction (1987, pp.230-1) was also explored. This framework demonstrates how the skills, abilities and background knowledge of different readers interact with the topic and structure of different texts and with the purpose, explicitness and cognitive demands of the tasks to enable different pupils to experience success on different occasions. However, as the dominance and authority of teacher literacy had emerged as a key factor within the observed practices and it was evident that Hutson's model needed development to make the influence of teacher literacy more explicit, the idea of incorporating this model within the analytic framework was also discounted.

THINKING IT THROUGH -- Discussion and reflection on methodology

Literacy at Transition was designed drawing on Frazer and Cameron's criteria (1992, p.138) for "good research". It offers some originality (reframing an issue of long-standing concern, using new ways of looking and devising a new analytic framework, thereby demonstrating how, as Michaels (1987) claims, a small case study can offer methodological insight); is responsive to existing literature; and combines sustained thought and thorough analysis over a period of time. Its longitudinal design recognises the superficiality of "one off" observations (Meek, 1983, p.222; Barr, 1987, p.155), that production of a coherent, sensitive interpretation, requires time for researcher familiarisation with the learning context, with the teaching and learning strategies within which these literacy practices are embedded and with the curriculum macrogenres. For

example, observation of successive Geography lessons foregrounded the gradual handover of responsibility for reading to the pupil. Without observation of the introductory lesson, appreciation of the teacher's literacy expectations was more difficult. Successive observations of Y6 spelling, "library" and group reading revealed these as regular routines in which each participant was familiar with the expected literacy practices.

The data collection methods encouraged interactive dialogue between researcher and informants (teachers and pupils), not only during the more formal "interviews" but also informally before, during or after lessons. Frazer and Cameron (1992, p.132) suggest that interaction not only affords opportunities for informants to become actively involved in the research process, making comments and possibly influencing researcher interpretation, but also enhances the eventual findings. Information about unobserved lessons, volunteered by pupils during classroom entry, often proved invaluable. In the final write-up, although the researcher's words tell the story and control the ascribed meanings, without informant contributions the story would be very different.

The relative merits and appropriateness of participant or non-participant observation are issues of methodological dispute within ethnography, each accorded different advantages and disadvantages. Non-participant observation allows the researcher to stand back, observe and record in detail whereas participant observation places greater onus on memory. However, Willes (1983, p.187) suggests participant observation is a powerful strategy since it gives access to an abundance of data; affords constant reminders of the unexpectedness, repetitiveness and untidiness of data; obliges the researcher to recognise the inevitability of some reactivity; and imposes caution in interpretation. Perhaps it is researcher personal style and skill which determines the most appropriate approach in any given situation.

During observation in the primary classroom (pilot study) the role of non-participant was sustainable, though not always effective. Researching within the researcher's own institution (initial study), it proved almost impossible: teacher and pupils expected active participation. In fact Willes (1983, p.16) believes pure non-participant observation may not be possible in natural classroom settings and suggests a balance between types. A pattern developed wherein the role switched between non-participant during teacher exposition and participant during individual work. Although the aim was to sustain the non-participant role wherever possible (to maximise opportunities for observation and note-taking), it proved necessary to interact with pupils during individual/group work to gain deeper insight into their understanding of the literacy activities and to obtain information about their approach to specific tasks. As non-participant, seated at the rear of the classroom, it was not possible to "see" how pupils used the text, e.g. to find information about Claudius, whether they wrote in sentences, or why they adopted a particular style of writing in the slave diary. It was also necessary to make the boundaries of participant observation explicit, to develop a shared understanding of how much interaction was permissible between pupil, teacher and observer before the research situation was transformed into collaborative teaching.

Ethnographers collect their data in the field, but what is the "field"? Atkinson (1992, p.5) suggests that it is not a "pre-given natural entity" but rather a construction originating in researcher fieldnotes. Ely et al. (1997, p.16) extend this idea, claiming that the field is always what the researcher wants it to be, a "series of internal constructs", and that researcher position in the field influences what is seen and the resultant interpretations. Researcher stance is not simply a matter of location, but also an attitude of mind, the perceptions which frame data collection and interpretation. Physical location may have been of concern in Mr Samson's classroom with its awkward shape and acoustics, but it is researcher understanding of literacy which led to interpretation of the practice as autonomous, dominated by teacher literacy, a place where teacher is

text mediator and definer of pupil literacy status and literacy is a set of skills to be learned.

What is the status of fieldnotes? Jackson (1995, p.39) introduces the notion of fieldnotes as liminal: the balance and physical link between the researcher, the observed world and the ethnographic account. Their style of construction reflects researcher personality, and they may make little sense to either the informants or to readers. Thus in this study, although anyone other than the researcher might struggle to make much sense of the “raw” fieldnotes, the ensuing transcript and commentary offer a version which another researcher could read and understand but might interpret differently.

Why were open-ended fieldnotes chosen in preference to a structured observation schedule? King (1984), observing practice in an infant classroom, and Rowland (1984), investigating the “enquiring classroom”, used open-ended fieldnotes. Both studies, as this one, were concerned to observe and reflect on practice. Open-ended fieldnotes permit responsiveness to any item of interest whereas use of an observation schedule such as FIAC may preclude the recording of interesting and relevant details (Croll, 1986). To facilitate the detailed analysis necessary for “thick” description fieldnotes included event sampling, continuous recording, verbatim dialogue and sequence. Cognisance that transcript construction influences what can be described as “literacy” in the observed setting (Green and Meyer, 1991, p.147), resulted in the adoption of the system proposed by Maybin (1990, cited in E621 Methodology Handbook, p.69) of two parallel columns for observations and commentary (see Appendix E for example), a system which encourages exploration of different interpretations (Swann, 1994). No observation is free from interpretation: what the researcher focuses on, how events are recorded and described, depend on an implicit interpretative framework developed through researcher characteristics, interests and experience. (Appendix C *Researcher Biography* attempts to make these interpretative frameworks more explicit.)

Unstructured observations also have the advantages, noted by McCormick and James (1988), of affording a wider conception and fuller description of the classroom; of revealing concern for the meanings attached to behaviour by pupils and teachers (verbatim recording of some teacher-pupil dialogue facilitated analysis of how teacher language structured the learning situation and interaction around text developed understanding of both content and of what “reading” means); and of allowing for some quantification of issues such as time, involvement and types of activities.

Observation was an active, absorbing process, characterised by ongoing internal dialogue (Walker, 1987), questioning, making interpretations of teacher and pupil practices and comparisons with the other phase, previous lessons or other classrooms. Where possible this dialogue was externalised through conversation with informants to validate researcher perceptions. Insight gained from such interactions compensated for the loss of fieldnotes made on location.

It was evident, as Mercer (1991, p.48) argues, that observer presence affected the classroom situation and the actions and reactions of participants. The nature and extent of this reactivity changed with each phase of the study, possibly exacerbated by changes in researcher professional status (see Appendix C). During the pilot the researcher was an “unfamiliar adult” from the other phase. In the initial study pupils may have reacted to withdrawal by the “reading teacher”. Mr Snowdon’s inclusion of more questions to pupils during exposition may have been a reaction to a brief discussion with the researcher. Both History teachers kept including the researcher as if teaching collaboratively. Throughout the research pupils appeared to accept researcher presence without question. In both secondary schools pupils are so accustomed to the presence of an extra adult (from Learning Support) that the researcher seemed to be regarded in a similar light, thus possibly reducing the level of

reactivity. Questions posed by pupils harbouring this misconception often enriched the emerging picture of the literacy practices.

Many questions remain unanswered. Was the reactivity to researcher as Literacy Consultant greater than to researcher as colleague? Would observation via the collaborative teacher role have caused less reactivity (but greater recording problems)? How can the researcher know what effect her presence has on the group? How many lessons have to be observed before a “natural performance” by all parties is seen or is this also a mythical state? What appears important is to foreground the perceived extent and nature of the reactivity and to be alert to its possible affect on the observed practices.

Interview featured as another important strand of primary data collection. Although Barton and Hamilton (1998, pp.64-5) argue that interview reflects the vernacular interpretation more directly than observational research reliant on outsider interpretation, it was believed that in this instance literacy practices would be more effectively identified through observation, with details and validation provided through the ongoing dialogue and informal interviews between researcher and informants.

The semi-structured interviews encouraged deeper probing of responses, allowed respondents the chance to express themselves at length, but retained sufficient shape to prevent rambling (Wragg, 1978, p.10). The schedules, offering lead questions to each section, with supplementary questions introduced as needed, were used flexibly so that if a respondent volunteered an answer relevant to a later section the information was followed up immediately. Inviting respondents to add further information perceived relevant, permitted them to influence the research agenda.

Responses illustrate how the effectiveness of a research tool, used by the same researcher, varies with different respondents, thus making it difficult to evaluate its appropriateness. For example in the initial study the first interview was the most formal, with questions adhered to and many prompts needed but only elicited short, often non-committal responses. The second and third interviews became progressively less formal, with the respondents offering more detailed information, introducing topics or asking questions. They resembled dialogue and were more informative. Possible reasons for the different response level include the “gender factor” (research suggests freer response to an interviewer of the same gender); researcher familiarity with the questions resulting in a more relaxed delivery; the number of interruptions; greater interest from girls who read regularly; the effect on self-image of collection from a lesson by a teacher associated with assessment and reading support. Although this experience informed practice in the main study, response levels still varied. In the group interviews dialogue developed more easily with two informants, while pupils involved in group interviews in the primary school responded more readily, probably because of the shared frame of reference. Boys were more forthcoming in individual than group interviews. In fact their level of response and depth of insight into the literacy practices during focused interviews (as demonstrated by Simon, see Appendix F), suggested that perhaps gender was not such an influential factor in response levels.

As exemplified in Appendix F, focused interviews concerning pre-specified situations enabled exploration of perceptions of shared events (McCormick and James, 1988, p.225), thus serving the dual purposes of data collection and respondent validation. Pupils confirmed that observed lessons were representative of experiences in that subject and that researcher interpretations were apposite. Reference to recent (jointly experienced) lessons and discussion of their work stimulated more in-depth discussion of the literacy practices than the semi-structured interviews. Although some pupils responded thoughtfully and informatively to questions requiring reflection and interpretation

(particularly in rationalising the purpose of specific literacy tasks), questions encouraging the “telling” of experiences produced the greatest detail. However, it was sometimes difficult to trace the threads and construct a coherent interpretation grounded in these latter responses.

The method of recording interview responses caused some concern. In most instances responses were written as notes, with pupil or teacher permission. There was initial concern (initial study) that this affected the flow of dialogue or appeared somewhat intimidating. Ideally nothing would have been written *in situ* but in the middle of a working day the memory load was too great; notes were needed to reconstruct the responses. Care was taken to write sufficient notes to capture the essence of responses and to record verbatim wherever possible without allowing researcher bias to omit “irrelevant” items. Acknowledging that a tape-recording would offer a more faithful record, a tape-recorder was used in the Y7 semi-structured interviews in the main study. However reactivity was greater. The recorder seemed to be more intrusive, making pupils far more reluctant to speak. Transcription time and clarity of recording also presented problems. Given the choice in subsequent interviews, all informants opted for note-taking. As with the observational fieldnotes, interview transcripts used a two column format for transcript and commentary (see Appendix F). This system encouraged exploration of issues and confirmed the relevance of the themes emerging through content analysis of the fieldnotes..

Issues emerging as potentially significant after preliminary content analysis aided construction of interview guides to shape the discussions (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.289), however, the pre-planned questions served mainly as an aide memoire to focus the researcher’s mind on the key issues. As Appendix F illustrates, dialogue was free-ranging. During the final pupil interviews the topics of discussion were varied to give balanced coverage of subject-specific issues without making any individual interview too long. It is difficult to predict

how rigid adherence to a pre-set schedule would have affected responses.

Teacher interviews appeared to have dual value: data collection instrument and professional development. Many teachers commented on the value of this opportunity to reflect on practice and explore the relationship between their beliefs and teaching practices.

The final primary research tool was the research journal, “companion to the research process” (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993, p.10), used to record short memos linking investigative issues with those arising from the literature and to document the development of perceptions and insights across the different stages of the research process. As “sounding board” it aided the learning process, as research tool it supported progressive focusing and reflexivity and as evidence it recorded key decisions and changes of interpretation or direction. “Reflective memos” (Ely et al., 1997, p.28), made during re-reading of fieldnotes, aided critique and fore-grounding of the influences affecting interpretation, while “analytic memos” (ibid., p.30) examined the data from differing perspectives.

The use of multiple-layered data sources facilitated triangulation of analysis across sources and served to reduce potential bias and subjectivity on the part of the researcher, teachers or students (Moje, 1996, p.180). Data sets keyed to specific practices provided multiple perspectives of how that practice had evolved. Each new analysis pushed the researcher to ask additional questions and provided the richness for “thick description”. Data collection and analysis were concerned with different levels and kinds of meaning, with consideration of the history, power, emotionality and knowledge providing the context for each literacy experience: thick description is a product of the type of data collected and its interpretation, (merely amassing copious data is a thin basis for making claims (Wolcott, 1995, p.91)).

Reliability and validity affect the replicability of research design and the verifiability of research findings. McCormick and James (1988, p.190) suggest that problems of reliability dominate qualitative approaches, the essential question being not whether the data and interpretations are reliable, but *how* reliable they are. Care has been taken to show how the data were collected, analysed and interpreted to facilitate design replication. Familiarity with Y7 lessons may have reduced the sharpness of observation and critical awareness and therefore the reliability of the data collected. Late arrival to some sessions may have resulted in erroneous interpretations of events and that the data are therefore neither reliable nor valid. Typical research dilemmas were encountered. Was it better to arrive late and collect as much data as possible or to omit the observation altogether? Should an observation be cancelled when the teacher advises that, as a disciplinary measure, pupils are to spend the lesson copying? Pupil answers may have differed for another interviewer, as the phrasing or intonation could have suggested a “preferred” response. Reaction to responses might also vary between interviewers.

It is difficult to know how representative the lessons are of Y6 or Y7 literacy practices or how representative are the views of the pupil respondents. Researcher experience within similar institutions suggests that they should be, but instinct is insufficient verification. Respondent validation has strengthened the validity of observation and interpretation of the issues raised through triangulation. Although internal and external validity were considered at the design stage it is only through the application of tests of plausibility, credibility and examination of the use of evidence (Hammersley, 1993; 1998, p.67) that the effectiveness of the design, methodology, data collection and analytic framework will be assessed.

The relationship between the researcher and the researched is an issue fundamental to any empirical research. Cameron (1992, p.5) suggests that epistemological assumptions determine the nature of the interactions and so

affect the methods and findings. Researcher skills are key determinants of the outcome of the research process. The greatest challenge was to maintain an open, inquiring mind. Linked to this was the need for effective questions; active, sensitive listening; unbiased and non-judgemental interpretation; and flexibility to respond to new situations, leads and ideas. Conduct of the research required sensitivity to issues of power (e.g. status as LEA Literacy Consultant provoked anxieties about possible judgemental findings); domination (e.g. teacher perception of researcher as literacy “expert” resulted in requests for advice, response to which could impact on practice and thereby affect the findings); and social equality (e.g. status as colleague and collaborative teacher made non-participant observation more difficult). As Parlett and Hamilton (1987, p.69) indicate, the researcher needed not only to draw on technical and intellectual capacity but also to employ interpersonal skills since co-operation can only be sought, not demanded. Respect for the informants’ interests resulted in shifting emphasis between ethical considerations, advocacy and empowerment.

Ethical and moral issues impinged upon the research. Feelings of gratitude to the respondents made it difficult to refuse requests. Teacher informants expect feedback, conceiving of the project as linked to their own professional development. In Pring’s words (1987) they are entitled to confidentiality, their privacy must be protected, and they have a right to know. Hence the importance of explicit explanation of the project when negotiating access. The issue of what to tell informants is an ethical one. Dialogic research methods can be empowering, but as Rampton (1992, p.56) suggests, that empowerment only occurs when informants are actively involved in the formulation and discussion of the research problem. Foregrounding issues concerning the literacy practices pupils encounter may have changed pupil informant attitudes or may make them more critical of their educational experience. Therefore all questioning had to be handled with tact and sensitivity. Some ethical issues arising in the initial study had implications for the main study: separate time slots had to be allocated for respondent validation and for feedback; the research purpose was

explained more clearly to each observed class, with informants given an explicit role. This latter action may have minimised “difficult” questions such as whether all the teacher’s words were being recorded and why, and encouraged the volunteering of information. Consideration for the informants’ well-being may have acted as a negative force, constraining researcher questions through respect for professionals as colleagues. Care and vigilance were needed to ensure that the research did not undermine the teacher’s professionalism in the eyes of his/her students.

Changing professional role in the course of the research brought out an interesting comparison between the difficulties inherent in researching within one’s own institution and problems that arise as an itinerant, but “authoritative” outsider. In theory, “belonging” should ease access to sources of information and provide deeper contextual understanding. In practice it is often difficult to make the familiar strange and be sufficiently perceptive about what is observed, as outsider observation tended to be closer and raise more questions, resulting in a more reflective approach. The level of unfamiliarity also helped sustain interest and concentration. Accountability for the use of working hours conflicts with time for research even when the study is designed to complement one’s role. Cover for absent colleagues, responding to headteacher demands, answering queries, being left alone with a class, all intruded into research as insider and caused lessons to be missed or late arrival. The logistics of different school timetables and locations were a problem when the professional role involved working with many schools, forcing very careful planning of the research schedule. It was not always possible to observe consecutive lessons and thus see a complete unit of work. The difficulties of coping with these pressures professionally, of balancing the differing expectations when facing split loyalties, were eased considerably by the levels of commitment, interest and support of colleagues.

*Chapter 5***What is Literacy?****Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Contextualisation of the study's conceptual and methodological frameworks leads to the central issue of establishing the differences and commonalities in literacy practices between the primary and secondary phases. Discussion of the findings is presented at two levels. Firstly, Chapters 5-7 offer thick description of the observed literacy practices, structured according to the three themes (*What is literacy?*, *Whose literacy?* and *How is literacy developed?*) identified within the "literacy" literature review (Chapter 3), with a separate chapter devoted to each theme. Secondly, aspects of continuity and discontinuity are drawn together in a cross-phase comparison (Chapter 8).

This chapter opens the analysis with an examination of the themes, emerging within the literacy practices of both phases and confirmed through triangulation of observational data, teacher and pupil informant interview responses and respondent validation, which illuminate what literacy comprises for members of the observed communities; their beliefs about literacy. Within these classrooms literacy can be represented in various ways: themes emerge from analysis of how literacy is used both for learning and for communication. As Barton and Hamilton (1998, p.14) have suggested, close observation and analysis of literacy events (which "are empirical and observable") enables inference and interpretation of the more "abstract" literacy practices; through examination of the orientation to print and of what constitutes a text in each setting, the models of literacy implicitly underpinning these literacy practices can be inferred.

The analysis is informed by a range of theoretical perspectives. Firstly Street's notion (1984) of the autonomous and ideological models (discussed in Chapter 3) is used to interpret the teachers' orientations to literacy, as expressed

through their actions (recorded in fieldnotes) and their words (interview responses). Secondly the analysis is grounded in the idea that teachers' "theories", the "systems or beliefs that organise their expectations and perceptions and influence their decisions and behaviour", are often tacit, taken-for-granted foundations for their more explicit beliefs (Edelsky, 1996, p.65). The assumption here is that teacher theories have some relationship, (whether causative, legitimising or didactic), to what they do in classrooms and that therefore examination of their classroom practices reveals their guiding beliefs about literacy. In this study this notion is operationalised through triangulation of data obtained from different sources (different school settings, different classrooms, different subjects and lessons and at different stages of the fieldwork) and from different data collection methods (observation, interview and document analysis).

The emergent themes reflect the variety of beliefs which interact to construct the discrete literacy practices of each classroom. Themes reflecting the beliefs of the autonomous model (*literacy as a set of skills to be learned*) and functional traditions (*literacy as an organisational tool*, *literacy as a record of learning* and *literacy as control*) contrast with those representative of a more ideological approach concerned with meaning (*literacy as meaning-maker*), social interaction (*literacy as social experience*) and personal response (*literacy as pleasure giver* and *literacy as identity*). The differing combination and extent to which each of these themes is represented within the literacy practices of the primary or secondary phase, rather than their predominance or absence, create the areas of discontinuity. Each theme is examined in turn. (Length constraints permit detailed discussion of dominant themes only.) The account represents an interpretation of literacy practices in the case study classrooms, comments are not intended as generalisations. Short extracts from lesson and interview transcripts are included within the discussion to illustrate specific points, longer extracts in Appendices E and F aid contextualisation and demonstrate the

analytical process. They also illustrate the range of data available for data source and methodological triangulation.

LITERACY AS A SET OF SKILLS TO BE LEARNED

Although the literacy practices within these classrooms suggest teacher awareness that “literacy is more than a set of reading and writing skills” (Rockhill, 1993, p.166) the observed practices frequently present literacy as a set of skills to be learned, thus reflecting Street’s autonomous model (1984, 1993, 1995, 1997). This is particularly true of the Y6 classrooms where the teachers appear to view the teaching of literacy as a set of skills as a prime responsibility. The Y7 teachers, however, although voicing beliefs that literacy is a set of acquirable skills, rarely teach these explicitly.

Some of the teachers conceptualise literacy in technical terms and treat it as independent of social context (two elements within Street’s definition, 1995, p.5). For Miss Seymour literacy involves decoding:

“to deal with the written word and be able to recognise signs
and symbols” [Semi-structured Interview E, p.1]

and for Mr Player it concerns technical accuracy:

“the ability to read fluently and write and spell accurately.”

[Y6 Pilot Observation 1, p.8]

Pupils also believe that literacy is something which can be learned and that mastery of technical accuracy will enhance their status as successful learners. For example, during a History test on the Romans Leonie enquired whether she would “lose marks if the full stops were wrong”, then proceeded to check her work carefully.

The observed literacy practices also resemble Freire’s “banking model” (discussed in Chapter 3), concerned with skills, decontextualised sounds, words and texts and wherein knowledge is possessed by the teacher and transmitted to

the learner. Although spelling is important in both phases, it is the primary phase where learning of spellings features prominently in the weekly routine: copying the phonically based spelling list on Monday morning; learning the words using the “look-cover-write-check” routine; tested on Tuesday, with poor performers monitored until spellings are mastered. Y7 pupils were also exhorted to learn subject spellings and given glossary/spelling tests, but spelling was not a lesson focus.

Reading was a regular “object of instruction” (Green and Weade, 1987, p.3) within the Y6 classrooms, with explicit teaching of strategies such as scanning, time allocated to group reading and the use of reading schemes such as *Ginn 360*. This latter process fostered the view of learning to read and write as the staged acquisition of a hierarchy of target skills. As Marie reported:

“The free readers kept us behind so we went back to Ginn.

We want to get through them so we can read better.”

[Y6 Main, Informal Group Interview 2, p.2]

This is an area of discontinuity with Y7 lessons. Whereas Y6 teachers emphasised a traditional, phonics approach to decoding, Y7 teachers prompted with the whole word. That reading was still a matter for explicit tuition in Y6 supports Christie’s argument (1998, p.47) that it is a myth that reading is only taught in the early years; these Y6 and Y7 pupils are still trying to “master the mechanics” of reading. It is also possible that this change in orientation, allied to the more complex subject texts, could be a source of difficulty since Doddington, Flutter and Ruddock (1999, p.34) argue that “the repertoire of skills built from ‘look-say’ methods and the ‘dissection’ strategy of analytical phonics” runs out as a support mechanism, causing some pupils to lose their sense of independence and thus confidence. Although they report this as occurring at the Y3-4 transition, this study suggests it is also a concern at the Y6-7 transition.

Technical accuracy was another skill to be learned, with propositional knowledge (knowing that) taking precedence over dispositional knowledge (knowing how) (Heap, 1985, p.248) in both phases, although Y7 library research tasks required use of the latter. Pupils in both phases were expected to write in complete sentences and reminded to use appropriate punctuation, but only in Y6 was this taught explicitly:

Teacher reads Q3 aloud: “‘Use these words in a sentence involving direct speech....’ You must get the punctuation correct in the words that are spoken. You must have speech marks around them.”

[Y6 Main, Observation 3, p.3; see Appendix E]

Pupils were expected to be “users of the existing system” (Kress, 1997, pp.114-5), rather than experiencing a problem-solving approach to knowledge about language and literacy.

The notion of literacy as a set of skills to be learned, an object of study explicitly taught and talked about (Barton and Hamilton, 1998, p.282) was further reinforced in Y6 by the Language Lesson (or “Literacy Hour” it was beginning to resemble). This included word, sentence and text level work, and emphasis on skills tuition: spelling rules, phonic patterns, definitions and word attack strategies at word level; use of punctuation and direct speech at sentence level; context cues, structure of recount texts at text level. No such explicit language development focus was observed in the secondary classrooms, although some subject teachers did highlight key words. Y7 pupils became accustomed to handling whole texts, but not with examining their linguistic structure.

LITERACY AS ORGANISATIONAL TOOL

Literacy is not simply an object to be reified, studied or learned, but also fulfils functional roles. Teachers and pupils use literacy to organise their daily work in

ways which exemplify Moje's notion (1996, p.181) of literacy as organiser and facilitator. Although the prime influence in developing this role for literacy is the teacher, there are cross-phase differences. In both Y6 classrooms the board was central to the day's organisation; planning tool, source of information and reference point for pupils, with its summary lesson plan, administrative reminders and messages:

"1.15 Finish maths tests

1.35 a) Recount - explain

b) Write details of own recount text

e.g. Confirmation Night

Retreat Day ...

+ Camp News"

[Y6 Main, Observation 4, p.1]

During each "lesson" extra, task-specific, information was added. Reference to the plan obviated pupil need for procedural questions. Secondary practices are different. Although the Geography worksheets were also apparently designed as a procedural reference (since they listed the tasks for the unit), they failed to produce the same level of pupil independence. (This exemplifies the contribution of triangulation to this study. It is only through the process of triangulation of data from documentary analysis, observational fieldnotes and informant explanation that this reading emerges; analysis of the document alone might suggest the comparison but not foreground the differing pupil responses.) The blackboard was used extensively in History but to summarise the knowledge constructed (diagrams developed during discussion or questions) rather than as an organiser.

The use of literacy as an organisational tool is not only a feature of teacher literacy practices, pupils are also expected to use literacy for this purpose. Firstly, *Homework Diaries* are issued to both primary and secondary pupils. Although style and usage differ somewhat, making differing demands and requiring different levels of literate independence, these diaries convey a consistent message that literacy offers a useful reminder and tool to organise

one's work. Primary pupils use a small notebook, copy homework from the board and determine layout while secondary pupils have a specially printed book, which is also designed to facilitate home-school communication. This contains timetable, school information and pages for recording rewards, and thus serves a wider range of organisational purposes. Pupils appreciate the structure which these offer:

“... with the homework diaries we've got now it's all under dates, so you always start a new page each week, the other diaries, if you had room, you had to carry on with, on that page, which got a bit difficult,”

[Y6 Main, Focused group Interview 2, p.9]

Secondly, *Y6 Reading Records* also serve as organiser since pupils not only record the pages read each session but also the pages the group have agreed to read at home.

Institutional literacy impinges on the classroom literacy environment through the *Form Noticeboard*. Street and Street (1991, pp.156-7) suggest the notices on the classroom walls situate pupils within a sign system which indicates the contract between the institution and the individual. In all the classrooms items such as fire bell routines, school times, timetable and, additionally in secondary classrooms, homework timetable and explanations of reward systems reinforce the concept of literacy as organisational tool. Although no pupil was seen to consult these notices and their positioning suggests teachers did not really expect them to be read, their presence demonstrates that literacy can serve official organisational functions. Literacy also presented as an organisational tool in the school libraries of both phases where charts explaining the Dewey classification system assisted pupils in the location of texts.

LITERACY AS RECORD OF LEARNING

The second functional role accorded to literacy within these classrooms is that of a tool to record learning. Although the nature of this record varies between phases, it is a principle with which both Y6 and Y7 pupils are familiar (and therefore discussed only briefly here): the idea that the written word is a means of demonstrating their knowledge to the teacher, where the text is a “product” (Clarke and Ivanic, 1991, p.168)). One facet of this is usage of literacy as an assessment tool; a usage illuminated by drawing on the notion of intertextuality, that the intertexts of any text are all other texts which the individual uses to make sense of it (Macken-Horarik, 1998, p.76). “Factual” assessment through spelling and subject tests (filling in blanks or matching definitions) does not appear either to require or to offer pupils the same opportunity to use their interpretative (readerly) knowledge of texts as when they engage in the writerly (production) dimension in coursework assignments e.g. “Settlement Report”. The two forms of assessment demand different literacy expertise, the coursework assignment offering discontinuity with the primary experience of literacy as an assessment tool, although in both instances the writing is undertaken to fulfil teacher-imposed educational goals.

Secondly there is discontinuity between phases in the use of literacy as a record of subject learning. Whereas much of the writing produced by the observed Y6 pupils belongs in the everyday domain and serves a functional purpose recording skills learning (accurate spelling, punctuation and word usage), Y7 writing belongs in the specialised domain of different subjects and serves a reproductive purpose, the prime aim being to record or reproduce a body of factual subject knowledge e.g. copying the “key idea” in Geography or summary of the main points in RE. Thus Y7 pupils are positioned within the passive model of language use, occupying a secretarial role as chronicler of events or labeller of objects for later reference (Frowe, 1999, pp.19-20), given little sense of literacy as a “cognitive amplifier”, as a tool to empower the mind (Bruner, 1972, cited in Wells and Chang-Wells, 1992, p.76).

Finally, through school reward systems, Y7 pupils experience another use of literacy as a record of learning wherein “merit marks” acknowledge and reward pupil learning, and “written credits” (small certificates describing specific achievements) provide a record of successful learning in more extended tasks. This use of literacy as both reward and record of learning was not seen in the observed primary schools.

LITERACY AS CONTROL

The third functional role assigned to literacy concerns its use as an instrument of control. This use is nothing new (see Graff (1994) or Olson (1994) for an historical perspective). While Graff (1994, p.160), stressing the “hegemony-creating functions of literacy provision through formal schooling”, suggests that with the transition to an industrialised society schooling fulfilled a more important role in the maintenance of social stability, Gee (1994, p.181) believes that the debate about the advisability of universal education led to strict control of the framework (and therefore the pedagogical process) of literacy teaching. Thus the use of literacy as control in some of the observed classrooms presents as a micro-level reflection of issues of concern at the macro-level for considerable time. Although Heap (1985, p.246) identifies the social organisation of knowledge and its control in classrooms as an issue of teacher transmission of knowledge, here control is more behaviourally orientated. (Although this use of literacy reinforces teacher dominance and authority (explored in Chapter 6), its use as an object of control rather than as a measure of teacher literacy determines its placement here.)

Two usages of literacy as control emerge from analysis of the data. The first, only witnessed in Y7 lessons, is the use of writing as a disciplinary measure, as when 7C have to copy the story of “Old Dag” in silence as punishment for unacceptable behaviour:

Having explained the situation the teacher instructed: “First read the story silently. Then copy the story neatly into your exercise book. Work in silence without asking any questions.” [7C RE, Observation 1, p.1]

This use of text as an object for reproduction rather than as a dynamic springboard to meaning making offers discontinuity with the Y6 literacy practices where stories were read either for skill development or enjoyment. Pupil comments also reflect their understanding of literacy as control. Sharooki states:

“We do a lot of writing in History, probably because when we’re going in the class is noisy.”

[Y7 Main, Focused Interview 4, p.2]

The use of literacy as control is also a strategy to ensure that teacher authority is maintained. One such usage is the copying of rules for lessons, a dominant feature of initial Y7 lessons, and a similar concern for control at the commencement of Y7 as that identified by Anderman and Maehr (1994, p.293) and Stables (1995, pp.162-3). The “house style” of Mr Snowdon’s Geography worksheets was specifically designed to maintain teacher control on two levels, firstly, to settle pupils to work:

“ I always put the “key idea” first because it gives them a simple activity (copying) which will calm them down and get them settled into the written work.”

[Y7 Pilot, Focused Interview C, p.3]

and, secondly, to ensure that the teacher could support pupils’ individual learning needs adequately:

“I let them copy answers from the book because I am scared that they will not be able to put it in their own words and I will not be able to cope with the amount of help they will need.”

[7X2 Geography, Observation 3, p.6]

In this instance literacy is used to control rather than stimulate or make meaning.

However, examples of literacy as occupier, a second facet of literacy as control, were present in both phases. Just as Webster, Beveridge and Reed (1996, p.40), in their four-quadrant framework of adult-child proximation, suggest that one common style for teaching and learning is the resource-driven style in which the adult relies on set resources to structure learning and literacy is used to occupy, so, occasionally, these Y6 and Y7 pupils experience the mundane, mechanical written tasks which can be completed without taking meaning from the text and which position them as passive learners. Y6 pupils in the pilot school completed decontextualised skills exercises placing words in alphabetical order, Y7 pupils copied questions and the ingredients for George's medicine or completed true/false exercises about the Roman gods.

LITERACY AS MEANING MAKER

Having examined elements of the observed literacy practices exemplifying the autonomous model and functional traditions, attention switches to those reflecting more ideological beliefs about literacy, beliefs that literacy aids understanding, interpreting and making sense of the world, and that pupils are learning to use the resources of literacy for culturally defined tasks and procedures. Such beliefs are expressed in teacher explanations of their understanding of literacy:

“Literacy is, I think, more than just reading and writing.....it's only after understanding that they [pupils] are able to participate and become involved.”

[Mr Samson, Focused Interview G, p.1]

However, although such a definition suggests awareness that language is integral to making meaning (Lankshear, 1997, p.23), the observed literacy practices do not always embody such beliefs.

MacGinitie and MacGinitie (1986, p.257) suggest that “students learn what the curriculum emphasises”. If pupils are only taught mechanisms and not meaning, then that is the way they will learn to view reading. Literacy practices within these classrooms, however, are not purely functional or autonomous. Most of the teachers operate from a more ideological standpoint, demonstrating some concern with meaning and social context. There is a measure of continuity between the Y6 and Y7 teachers (except Mr Snowden) in that all, sometimes, use texts as an opportunity to make meaning in the “New Literacy” sense: “Literacy is something to share, a language for connecting with others, all in the amplification of meaning.” (Willinsky, 1990, p.79). Pupils in both phases experience private, communicative and formal contexts for comprehension as different experiences stress reading as recognition or reasoning (Tuinman, 1986, pp.201-7), but Y7 pupils’ experiences are more often at the “formal” level. Some of the uses of literacy in subject teaching contribute to the development of pupil understanding that literacy is not an isolated skill to be learned or used on demand, but is “a social process in the daily landscape” (Willinsky, 1990, p.6).

Literacy practices in these classrooms fulfil three of Kress’s four main characteristics for literacy as a theory of meaning making (1997, pp.153-6). Interactions around text, especially in Y7 History and Geography in the Main Study, demonstrate understanding and developing command of literacy’s meaning making potential; there is awareness that oral, written and graphic/visual modes can be used for communication and some encouragement of multimodality (after reading, watching and discussing a video about life in Rome, pupils design a poster using text and image to encourage people to visit Rome). However, there is greater focus, especially in Y6, on making pupils competent users of literacy, with only occasional encouragement (in Y7) of creative and innovative use of language to express personal meaning. Such opportunities occur more frequently in subjects such as History (empathetic

writing in a Roman slave's diary) and RE (exploring personal ideas of "wonder" at God's creation) than in English, where, although pupils have the opportunity to write poems (e.g. "Natural Highs"), they are constrained by the form and structure of teacher model.

Interactions around text enable pupils to see that although meanings find their expression in texts, the origins of these meanings are outside the text, negotiated and constructed "in concrete situations of social exchange" (Kress, 1989, p.18) and that the language used in interactions around texts creates contextual meaning (Kress, 1997, p.132). Through exploration of family experiences Y6 pupils are able to invest meaning in the "Story of Conal Byrne", whilst through reflection on their knowledge of support networks Y7 pupils are able to understand a text concerning the settlement patterns of ethnic groups within their own city.

In both phases pupils are offered experiences which foster appreciation that they are learning not only how to be literate but also what literacy is good for. They are given opportunities to use literacy to solve problems, to discover, connect and respond, but not to confront (such experiences reflecting "New Literacy" beliefs (Willinsky, 1990, p.153)). Problem-solving opportunities are created for Y6 pupils in which verbalisation and writing aid pattern identification and meaning making in Mathematics (Marks and Mousley, 1991, p.145). After practical activity and discussion during the investigation "On the Bus", pupils used symbols, numbers, or prose to write instructions:

- a) P1-P2, B-P1, P2-P4 (P=pupil);
- b) e-f, d-e (letters represent squares);
- c) $A1 > B1$ (co-ordinates);
- d) Move Ian to the side, then move Sarah back.

[Y6 Main, Observation 3, p.15]

The teacher encouraged experimentation within this recording, the important factor was to produce a message meaningful to the learner and expressing

his/her understanding. Thus pupils were encouraged to see literacy as a means of supporting their learning and communicating their ideas. Y7 problem-solving activities more often arise from the textual examination of factual information than from experiential tasks, activities in which the reading is a means to another end (Barton and Hamilton, 1998, p.156). When producing advice for people living near an active volcano, pupils discover information from text, diagram and video, connect the ideas and write a response. Such a task not only offers pupils a more sociocultural experience, demonstrating that literacy is more than the four language modes, that it also involves the practices in which those processes are embedded (Moje, 1996, p.175); but also requires dispositional knowledge of how to construct an appropriate text. It is the making of meaning through talk around the range of texts involved which situates these specific events of literacy in social practices.

Group reading lessons also offered experiences of literacy as meaning maker. Shared reading lessons can be viewed as ideological constructs in which pupils learn to position themselves in interlocking situational, interpretational and textual contexts (Gregory, 1992, p.38). The prime purpose of the Y6 *Reading Record* was not to record progress through the text but rather to encourage a brief personal response, encouraging pupils to use writing to develop reading preferences. Written tasks following reading “real books” encouraged reflection on the text:

4. Choose one part of the book (*Paddy's Pot of Gold* by Dick King-Smith) which made you laugh. Explain what happened.
Has anything like this ever happened to you?

[Y6 Main, Observation 5, p.10]

However, pupils using the worksheets attached to the *Ginn 360* reading scheme did not share this experience; here questions were literal comprehension or skills-based. For pupils in 7.4 group reading offered a less structured or focused experience, the purpose was to offer decoding practice in a supportive environment rather than to explore personal response to a text. The teacher

“listened” to pupils read “high-interest/low-readability” texts but did not discuss the text with them or expect a written response.

Mercer (1993, p.35), arguing from a Neo-Vygotskian viewpoint, suggests that to understand how pupils gain educationally relevant knowledge and understanding, it is important to establish the meaning of classroom tasks to pupils. Y6 pupil understanding of the value of literacy as meaning maker was evident in their description of the production of a brochure, in which they had to:

“get the message across that you should cut down on fat and sugar”. [Y6 Main, Informal Group Interview (girls), p.5].

Here they were required to engage in both “communicative” and “formal comprehension” (Tuinman, 1986, p.201) to make meaning of texts and to communicate their understanding to another audience. Y7 pupils are beginning to articulate their understanding that different types of literacy tasks enable them to construct different kinds of meaning: whereas writing the diary of a Roman slave:

“put you in the position so you understand it. Like learning about the punishments and realising that they didn’t get punished every day. It made you think what it was really like.”

the essay “Slavery - Good or Bad?”

“was different. The diary put you in the position of a slave and made you think about how it was like, but in the essay you were saying your opinion.”

[Simon, Y7 Main, Focused Interview 1, p.6]

Thus Simon demonstrates his awareness of how the empathy task built factual knowledge and understanding whereas the essay required the weighing of evidence and expression of personal opinion.

LITERACY AS SOCIAL EXPERIENCE

Do the observed literacy practices embody an individualistic or social conception of learning? Central to the ideological model of literacy is the notion that reading and writing are not solitary, isolated acts, but activities jointly enacted within the social practices of a community. Barton and Hamilton (1998, p.3) refer to literacy as something that people do, “an activity located in the space between thought and text”. Equally in these classrooms literacy is not a purely solitary experience, but rather an “involver” (Moje, 1996, p.181) where meaning is developed at the interpersonal level. Reading, and to a lesser extent writing, are shared activities. Pupils in either phase are rarely asked to read a text individually before discussion. (Pedagogical approaches to developing literacy through interaction are explored in Chapter 7.) Y6 topic work, Maths investigations and sentence writing are all social experiences in the use of literacy to make meaning. However, although some paired work occurs in Y7, as when reading in English or interpreting photographs of city streets in Geography, the focus is on either teacher-led whole class interaction around text where the activity of reading comprises a “socially negotiated performance” (Green and Weade, 1990, p.328) or individual task completion. Pupils demonstrate awareness of the changing nature of this literacy practice:

“In primary you used to work in groups. In secondary you’re on your own, you do it yourself.”

[Katie, Y7 Main, Focused Interview 3, p.9]

A dominant feature of the literacy practices of both phases is pupil reliance on peer support, discussing work, trying out answers, sharing newly created texts and prompting during whole class reading. Such activity is social, leaving no pupil isolated, fearful of “showing yourself up” through inability to decode accurately.

Group work demonstrates the effectiveness of literacy as a social experience for these pupils. The skills developed in Y6, where seating arrangements encourage

discussion of work in progress and opportunities such as Group Reading inculcate group identity and responsibility for learning, prepare pupils for group work in Y7. (However, no such opportunities were witnessed until the latter half of the Spring Term.) Editing of each other's writing was done sensitively:

"She's got lots of 'sos' and 'ands'. It's good though."

[7.2 English, Observation 4, p.4]

but offered pupils the opportunity to demonstrate knowledgeability (Cook-Gumperz, 1986, p.3), with individual strengths recognised and acclaimed when seeking information in the Geography research quiz on earthquakes:

"Kerry will know this because she did that big diagram."

[7T Geography, Observation 10, p.4]

Gutierrez (1994, pp.137-8) suggests that pupil participation in such events not only helps shape the activity but their own literacy practices are also shaped by the activity of others. Thus they acquire both linguistic and situated understandings of what constitutes literacy in particular classrooms.

LITERACY AS PLEASURE GIVER

Literacy was also associated with personal response and enjoyment, at home and at school, with occasions when reading (or writing) was "the recognised goal of the activity" (Barton and Hamilton, 1998, p.152). However, opportunities for experiencing this enjoyment were more prevalent in the primary classrooms, where Y6 pupils read self-selected books, silently, uninterrupted and individually during ERIC and the weekly Library lesson, were developing clear reading preferences and would initiate conversations or voice opinions about their reading:

Kieran: "I think the Goosebumps stories are good stories but they are not very well written."

Cheryl: "When you see a film it's never the same as the book."

[Y6 Main, Observation 2, p.12]

Enjoyment also came through the class reader (currently *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*) and shared reading of poems. Y7 pupils did not have the same opportunities for private reading within curriculum time; there were no ERIC or library lessons, no regular individual reading sessions in English, and posters encouraging reading for pleasure were situated in the library rather than in classrooms. However, pupils express enjoyment of certain subject-based writing tasks (such as the Roman Slave's Diary and the interview with a Roman soldier), requiring an empathetic response, imagination as well as factual knowledge, and knowledge of narrative structure.

Literacy as pleasure giver also featured in home literacy practices. Y6 girls reported reading poetry, books by Judy Blume, Dick King-Smith and Roald Dahl. One girl visited the public library regularly while two boys bought Goosebumps stories.

"I like Dick King-Smith's books....I like to read in bed, or in the corner in the living room when I am bored. I like to sit on the floor and read." [Aimee, Y6 Main, Observation 1, p.3]

Leisure time reading remains a source of pleasure for some Y7 pupils, although tastes and reading patterns alter. At the start of Y7 preferences still include the "old favourites" from Y6 but gradually change to horror and science fiction (as also found by Sarland (1991)), to "Spookesville" and Point Horror, to Betsy Byers, R.L.Stine and Gillian Cross, and become influenced by family reading tastes, Stephen King, Dean Koontz and non-fiction "science" books. Some boy informants are beginning to discover the pleasures of reading:

"I never used to read much, now I've got books that I want to read." [Edward, Y7 Main, Focused Interview 5, p.4]

However, pupils also suggest that school demands (homework) impinge upon such leisure pursuits.

Some pupils also write for pleasure, demonstrating how schooled literacy practices percolate into home life (Street and Street, 1991, p.143). Pupils in both phases write stories, whether original:

“Mom says I’m a terror for writing. I write little stories.”

[Marie, Y6 Main, Informal Group Interview, p.5]

inspired by films:

“I love making up stories, like of films I’ve watched, you know like writing the story but changing parts.”

[Lyndsey, Y7 Initial Study, Semi-structured Interview 4, p.4]

or by books:

“If I read something and its really good, I might write my own story.” [Simon, Y7 Main, Focused Interview 1, p.9]

For Craig (Y7) pleasurable writing activities also include writing up the results of personal research.

While such literacy behaviours in non-school contexts demonstrate how these pupils take from schooled literacy practices (a feature highlighted by Sola and Bennett, 1994, p.134) they shed no light on pleasurable home literacy practices not grounded in schooled literacy. The extra-school literacy uses cited by these pupils represent a much narrower range of activities than those described by the 10-12 year olds in Maybin’s study (1996). This raises issues of pupil reactivity to the perceived focus of the research/interview: whether the quoted examples are the main pleasurable uses of literacy at home, or simply ones considered appropriate within the context of interviews focusing on school literacy practices. This discussion is developed further in Chapter 6.

LITERACY AS IDENTITY

Literacy as identity also reflects the beliefs of an ideological model of literacy. Ivanic (1998, p.67) suggests that “literacy activities are shaped by and are shapers of people’s identity - acquiring certain literacy practices involves

becoming a certain type of person". Y6 informants demonstrate consciousness of this close link between literacy and their social identity, illustrating how the "acquisition of literacy becomes isomorphic with the child's development of specific social identities and positions" (Street and Street, 1991, p.147).

Comments expressing awareness of their status as readers and writers, such as:

"She's [the teacher] told my mom she makes me read to boost my confidence."

[Marie, Y6 Main, Informal Group Interview, p.2]

reveal the sensitivity surrounding issues of literate competence (Schwab, 1994, p.138).

Y7 pupils exhibit similar awareness of the inextricable relationship between their literacy practices and their personal self-esteem and confidence as learners.

Reference to research skills:

"I picked a big reference book about the Romans and used the contents page to find the right answers."

[Sharooki, Y7 Main, Literacy Log Interview, p.4]

serves to frame the individual as a capable, competent reader; while increased personal self-confidence:

"I've got a lot more confidence. In primary...I didn't have the confidence to read out so much."

[Katie, Y7 Main, Focused Interview 3, p.6]

is attributed to improved oral reading competence.

However, the connection between literacy and identity is not purely a matter of skill levels, the physical characteristics of created texts offer insights into pupil position as writer within his/her social environment (Ormerod and Ivanic, 2000, p.105). These pupils display a developing sense that, as Woods (1998, pp.134-6) found, identity is expressed through the tools of literacy:

“In primary, with fountain pen it was neater....It’s quicker to use ballpoint if you have to take notes down. I think if I write in blue my work looks neater than if I use black. “

[Marie, Y7 Main, Focused Interview 6, p.8]

and that literacy offers the freedom to express personality. Y6 teachers assist pupils to develop literate identities through free choice of readers, writing implements and style of presentation and (occasionally) negotiation of the writing task, permitting the use of language as expression (or “recognition” literacy as Hasan (1996, p.415) terms it). Y7 teachers, on the other hand, while still offering free choice of writing tool, give pupils less independence in the choice of texts or form of writing tasks.

The development of literate identity is also affected by positioning, roles and power relationships and dominant language use within classrooms. These issues, and the influence of both teacher and pupil literate identities on classroom literacy practices, are explored in the following chapter.

If literacy is constructed by individuals and groups as part of their everyday life, what does “becoming literate” mean for these pupils? Do the criteria change with the move to the secondary school? Luke (1993b, p.10) suggests that, rather than simply making sense of texts, it entails “learning a schema for what literacy is, how to use it, when, where and to what possible ends”. Although the literacy practices of these classroom literacy communities seem to draw on elements of both the autonomous and ideological models of literacy, the main emphasis (especially in Y7) appears to be to develop an understanding of literacy as a social, interactive process for the creation of meaning and the development of identity. This issue, of whose literacy determines the literacy practices (and how), forms the focus of the next chapter.

*Chapter 6***Whose Literacy?*****Data Analysis and Interpretation***

Understanding of the differing and distinctive features of the literacy practices in each phase is deepened by examination of whose literacy contributes to these and the literacy roles and subject positions which participants are allowed to occupy. Evidence is offered to illustrate how the different literacies interact to become the literacy practices of these communities and also to highlight 'continuities and discontinuities in practices between phases. After a brief section foregrounding key issues, four main themes are discussed, demonstrating that in these classrooms teacher, pupils and text occupy a variety of literacy roles and positions and that, additionally, the literacy of the world beyond the classroom impinges upon the literacy practices of all key players.

In order to offer detailed description, explanation and comparison of the richness and complexity of classroom literacy practices, these practices were studied from more than one standpoint and using a variety of data collection methods (as explained in Chapter 4). The following discussion of *Whose Literacy?* is the product of time triangulation – this is a longitudinal study in which two groups of pupils were followed from Y6 to Y7; space triangulation – the same data collection methods were employed in three different settings; and methodological triangulation – data was collected through observation, interview and analysis of documents and checked through respondent validation. Differences emerging between data sets (e.g. whether it is the teacher or the text that is the authoritative voice) were as important as correlations (e.g. that the percentage of teacher talk was higher than the percentage of pupil talk in all the observed classrooms). Triangulation therefore

involved not merely making inferences but, more importantly, establishing which of these inferences offered valid interpretations.

The analysis draws on a range of theoretical perspectives. Firstly, the notion that literacy instruction occurs within a significant context of values (de Castell and Luke, 1986, p.88) informs the finding that in each setting literacy is redefined or negotiated within the parameters allowed by the dominant participants, that the “literacy practices are patterned by [the] social institutions and power relationships” (Barton and Hamilton, 1998, p.7), that “what ultimately counts as literacy in a particular context depends on who has the power to decide” (Cairney and White, 1999, p.84). In each case study classroom teacher and pupils “occupy” traditional roles, with the teacher dominating interactions and determining relevant knowledge (Fairclough, 1989, p.38).

Secondly, the concept of social meaning, beliefs about who should engage in particular literacy practices, in what situations and under what circumstances (Reder and Wiklund, 1993, p.179), is used to demonstrate how participants engage in literacy practices in different, often unequal, ways, with constantly changing roles and positions. Thirdly, the notion that meaning is always constructed within a context which limits the range of permissible meanings foregrounds issues of participant access to all the possible contexts and therefore to all the possible ways of reading and writing (Christie and Unsworth, 2000, p.3). Thus the literacy practices of the dominant language user are shown to delimit those of the other participants.

Identification of whose literacy is dominant and understanding of how positions as producers and receivers of literacy are constructed is informed by ideas about the interpersonal metafunction of language (Halliday, 1985); identity (social identities and subject positions); and relation (social relationships) (Fairclough, 1992, p.64). Analysis and identification of literate identity also draw on the

notions of performer, author and character (Ivanic, 1994, pp.12-13). In this study the performer is the teacher or pupil focusing on the composing process, allowing/using space for discussion and revision of texts; while the author is the teacher or pupil who creates/uses opportunities for self-expression and personal meaning making. The third and predominant identity, however, is not Ivanic's character (conscious of the social identity constructed through writing), but "orchestrator", the teacher who "orchestrates" the literacy experience. This role is examined first.

TEACHER LITERACY

Analysis of the observational and interview data not only offers overwhelming evidence of the centrality of teacher influence in pupil literacy experiences (as Meek, 1983, p.222 suggests), but also reveals the extent of continuity in the place of teacher literacy within the literacy practices of the two phases. Themes emerging through content analysis and progressive focusing, and confirmed through data and methodological triangulation, suggest that teachers in this case study appear to occupy five main literacy positions: dominant language user, authority, text mediator, literacy definer and literate adult. However, the extent to which any one teacher fulfils each of these roles varies, as does the extent to which the roles overlap and are mirrored by pupil and text roles. The dominant issue, subsuming all these teacher roles, is that of power relations.

Teacher as Dominant Language User

Each case study classroom can be interpreted as a site of power relationships wherein the dominance of teacher literacy serves to embed relationships of "hierarchy, authority and control" (Street and Street, 1991, p.151). The principal literacy within each classroom is that of "teacher as dominant language user", as orchestrator and legitimator of the literacy practices which

create its unique literacy community. It is teacher talk which dominates interactions around text and occupies most time and “teacher as moderator” who allocates turns, states the rules delimiting relevant language and literacy contributions and protects the “interactional space constructed for each [literacy] event” (Heras, 1994, p.293); who evaluates pupil utterances (Fairclough, 1992, pp.152-7); and dominant teacher literacy which is presented as standard literacy (Street, 1994a, pp.142-3).

A number of teacher actions reinforce the asymmetric power relations in these classrooms (see Chapter 3; Fairclough, 1989, p.46 and Barton and Ivanic, 1991, pp.8-9) and position teachers as the dominant language users. The preponderance (in all these classrooms) of whole class instruction, with its conventional IRF routines, positions the pupils as respondents and reinforces teacher power and the high status of teacher literacy (Haworth, 1999, p.114). Teachers’ questions determine not only which aspects of a topic are important, but also whether pupil experience is valid within the discussion (Paechter, 1998, p.161). The extent of teacher control of knowledge varies. For example Mr Snowdon, the most dominant, underlines his power through the use of rhetorical questions:

“What does it mean ‘billions together’? In a cloud there are billions of these tiny water droplets all together.”

[7X2 Geography Observation 3, p.3]

The lack of pause between question and explanation indicates to pupils that no answer is expected. Teacher methods for shaping and structuring the learning, using questions, commands or lengthy exposition, accepting pupil answers as correct but re-phrasing or extending them, reinforce their dominance. Most use questions requiring single word answers, subsequently repeating or elaborating what they perceive as the pupil’s intended meaning or offering their own interpretation. For example when a pupil suggests “barbarians” as a reason for the decline of Rome, without inviting further explanation Miss Seymour immediately elaborates:

“They invited the barbarians to join the army. They also bribed the Goths to keep the peace and let them settle in the Balkans, even gave them some of their land. That was really bad!”
[7T History Observation 6, p.5]

Not only the discourse of reading and literacy tuition ensures teacher dominance and power, but also the text choice and approach (Kress, 1990, p.86). Having selected the text, the teacher structures the interaction around that text and establishes its purpose as a source for learning about language e.g. Y6 study the structure of the recount text *Conal Byrne*; for explicit reading tuition e.g. Y6 Pilot pupils use a text on rain forests to practise skimming and scanning; or for factual information e.g. Y7 pupils read to learn about earthquakes or the events of 1066.

Register is another important facet in the reinforcement of teacher position as dominant language user, but choice of register varies. In the Y7 classrooms the phrasing or “politeness” of requests disguise the implicit command, offering only illusory freedom for pupils to introduce ideas (Edwards and Mercer, 1994, p.199; Rowland, 1999, p.119). Examples from 7T Geography lessons show that polite questions can be instructions: “Can you please turn to the page on volcanoes?” or ways of saving pupil negative face: “Are you sure about it? Could you please look up ‘core’ for me now?”, commands which the pupil has to follow. The discontinuity which this offers with the direct instructions of the Y6 classrooms could be a source of confusion, even though instructions such as “get your library books” also contain implicit “common knowledge” messages that pupils should start to read. There is thus continuity in the fact that the observed patterns of classroom talk in both phases construct message systems which link cultural knowledge, social power and literacy (Luke, 1993b, p.41), which privilege teacher literacy, positioning the teacher as knowledgeable and regulator of learning and pupil literacy as subordinate. However, the way in which this power is enacted may reflect personality rather than phase.

(Practices surrounding the use of the pronoun “we” (explored in the full account) further illustrate how choice of register both influences the literacy practices and supports teacher position as dominant language user.)

Teacher as Authority

The position of teacher as dominant language user is closely related to and supported by that of teacher as authority. However, whereas the former is concerned with teacher temporal and physical orchestration of the literacy practices (through the amount of teacher talk and determining and leading of approaches), the latter reflects the status of teacher knowledge about language and literacy. Teacher positioning as “authority” offers some continuity across phase. In all these classrooms the teacher occupies the role of “authoritative language user” (Wyatt-Smith, 1997, p.8), determining what is appropriate or relevant knowledge but exerting this authority differently. The main strategies for establishing teacher as authority are the use of pragmatic (pseudo, closed and test) questions, thus reflecting the relative educational status of teacher and pupil knowledge (Durkin, 1986, p.197), and the interpretation of texts. Through elaboration of student answers, teachers develop a metatextual commentary, using the text to strengthen their position as initiators, receivers and interpreters of pupils’ knowledge.

The influence of teacher as authority is also exhibited through the positioning of teacher as examiner. All these teachers serve as audience for pupil writing and assert their authority as language users through their comments on the quality of pupils’ responses. Occasionally this role is made explicit, for example Miss Spark presents herself as the audience for the recipe for a special “medicine”, but usually is implicit. Nevertheless pupils perceive the purpose of many tasks to be to demonstrate “what we had learnt” [Marie, Focused Interview 6, p.2].

However, teacher position within these literacy practices is not always one of dominance and authority, occasionally teachers position themselves as learners. Two teachers, both primary trained although one now teaches in the secondary school, make explicit reference to “learning from pupils”. This suggests a possible area of discontinuity, that whereas the primary teachers occasionally position themselves as co-learners, the observed secondary teachers are more concerned to preserve the authority of their subject knowledge.

Teacher as Text Mediator

Teacher authority as a language user is strengthened in all the observed classrooms by how the teacher as text mediator places him/herself between the text and the reader (pupil), thereby positioning pupils as receivers of teacher-mediated text knowledge (Luke, 1988, p.156), unable to derive the desired meaning from the text independently, and the text as too difficult to communicate its message directly to pupils; displaying to pupils what will count as appropriate textual reading (Freebody, Luke and Gilbert, 1991, p.445); and highlighting the relationship between teacher authority and text authority (Martin, 1999, p.41). However, the extent to which text style or teacher approach to it affects its meaning potential for pupils varies. The observed teachers led pupils to particular kinds and levels of reading practice, through discursively structuring what counted as a legitimate classroom reading (Baker, 1991, p.176) using strategies of orientation, negotiation and inscription (Jones, 2000, p.71). Thus the nature of pupil knowledge and understanding of reading can be construed as a product of teacher literacy.

These teachers are not “passive transmitters” of knowledge; their interpretation of what is to be learned from the text helps define for pupils what must be acquired as text knowledge (Luke, Fraser and Luke, 1989, p.252). Teacher preferred methods of text mediation are the interruption of reading to explain

and interpret, paraphrase or define words. When Mr Severn interrupts reading about weather-types to explain the textual use of “mild”:

“Not too cold, not too hot. You could go down the shop wearing a jumper, you wouldn’t need a coat.”

[7X1 Geography Observation 1, p.5]

this not only highlights teacher perception of the important content but also positions pupils as ignorant of its meaning. When Mrs Paige pauses after reading “we will be looking at how the writers have managed to write effective recount texts” to explain “effective writing; that’s writing that is really well structured, it doesn’t just go on and on, it has an order to it” [Y6 Main, Observation 4, p.5], she is pre-empting the writer’s message and imposing her own beliefs. Pupils are thus positioned not as active interrogators of text, but as passive receivers of teacher-mediated knowledge.

Whereas (see Chapter 5) the observed Y6 teachers generally orientate pupils to the text as practice-ground for specific reading skills, the secondary teachers usually orientate students to the text as information source, something to be consulted or remembered (Heap, cited in Baker and Freebody, 1989, p.265). Privileged teacher knowledge of texts is demonstrated through the use of implicit frames of reference for creating and ordering experience; taking propositions produced through question and answer and locating them in the text (a form of self-authorisation using the text as resource). Mr Suleman, Mr Severn and Miss Somerville also extend their questions to extra-textual considerations, thereby imbuing the text with a real-life context, through reference to friendship patterns, clothing or football. Further text mediation occurs in Miss Somerville’s lessons when she concretises the notion that “the text contains the answer and one has to learn how to look”, through the routines established for textual examination.

It would therefore appear that in the secondary case study classrooms it is not the text that positions readers (as Misson (1998) suggests) but the teacher that positions the reader (pupil) through the way s/he mediates the text.

Teacher as Literacy Definer

a) Defining pupil literacy status

How do pupils know whether their literacy skills are adequate for school tasks or develop their own literate identities? Some of this self-knowledge arises from the messages which teachers, sometimes unwittingly, give. In this study teacher comment and discourse (in both phases) position pupils as particular kinds of learners, with particular, individual literacy status. The role of literacy definer both positions pupils with respect to their literacy status and reinforces teacher power and dominance as the authoritative language users.

Messages about pupil literacy status are not only given by placement in reading/English group, the teacher, as literacy definer, also assigns pupil reading status in ways which indicate personal beliefs about reading. Comment on lexical complexity:

“That had some quite difficult words but we need some-one that really gets their tongue round words for the next bit.

Daniel, will you read?” [Y6 Pilot Observation 1, p.4]

suggests the teacher equates “good” reading with effective decoding skills, whereas listening to reading scheme reader during library lessons:

Class are sitting reading self-selected books independently.

Teacher invites one pupil to read to her. He is the only pupil with a reading scheme book. She hears no other person read

in the course of the lesson. [Y6 Main Observation 1, p.3]

not only accords the pupil different reading status from his “independent reader” peers, but also indicates teacher belief in the use of reading schemes to teach reading.

Literacy status as writers is defined, in both phases, by teacher oral comments:

“Good, someone knows a name. You can put Victoria Road,
well done.” [7T Geography Observation 4, p.3]

differentiated tasks; and the type and level of support during independent work; and, additionally, in the secondary phase, marks, the awarding of Merit Marks and Written Credits, with the latter carrying the power of an extrinsic reward and institutional recognition.

Comments from pupil informants demonstrate the power of these messages and how pupils interpret them. One Y7 girl is confident of the improvement in her writing skills because of change in set placement:

“I was in the bottom set at ...(primary school) but I did some writing over the summer holidays and got into the top set for English and SATs result.” [Aimee, Focused Interview 2, p.3]

while another has developed a positive literate identity through her perceptions of teacher behaviour:

“When I put my hand up to read she always picks others. She doesn’t pick me because she knows I can read and she wants to give others a chance.” [Katie, Focused Interview 3, p.5]

b) Defining literacy opportunities

Teachers in both phases also defined pupil literacy status by the ways they limited pupil opportunities for literacy skill development. In all the observed classrooms the teacher, in the role of “literacy orchestrator”, often dictated the form of the written response. Examples include Y7 pupils being asked to design a poster to illustrate how to develop the local area or Y6 pupils being asked to explain words by using them in sentences containing direct speech. However, not all lessons were thus defined. Miss Somerville, as performer, offered an approach to literacy in which pupils examined the form of their work and, with

explicit teacher guidance, engaged in re-drafting, while Miss Seymour, as author, required pupils to produce life histories and empathetic responses, drawing on personal experience.

Sometimes teachers were more prescriptive and determined the structure, content and presentation of the response also. Writing frames devised by the History and Geography teachers to scaffold pupils' writing (Wray and Lewis, 1997) enabled most pupils to produce fairly lengthy, detailed and coherent texts but also presented difficulties. Some pupils were constrained by the syntax of "literate adult" sentence stems which positioned them as apprentice literates:

"She started the sentences for us. I couldn't relate to that."

[Katie, Focused Interview 3, p.7]

"I never did a writing frame at primary school....I don't know why she uses them, probably to make the work seem harder....It would be a lot easier if I could just write."

[Sharooki, Literacy Log Interviews, p.4]

and would have preferred freedom to draw on their own literacy practices to shape their learning (Langer and Applebee, 1987). Similarly Mrs Paige, in role as literacy definer, allowed Y6 pupils no negotiation of the task to plan a recount text about "Confirmation Night". (Unusually for Y6 on this occasion content and skill focus carried equal status.)

A range of teacher actions further defined pupil literacy opportunities. Although occasionally all teachers offered pupils the opportunity to read aloud, this featured regularly only for Y6 pupils and with Miss Somerville and Miss Seymour, while teacher reading aloud was common practice. Emphasis on literal level comprehension and teacher definition of unfamiliar vocabulary also featured in both phases, but only Miss Seymour and Mrs Paige encouraged reflection on language (identified as important by Williams, 1998). Teacher insistence on looking after literacy products (e.g. keeping the "Settlement

Reports" safe in the classroom) was a direct contrast to Y6 where pupil independence was expected in this respect.

Paris and Wixson (1987, p.35) argue that if pupils receive little instructional guidance or few opportunities to read and write, they are being denied access to literacy despite apparent participation. Their claim (p.41), that US Students are not provided with sufficient opportunities to confront text with the challenging assignments that foster higher order literacy development, seems equally relevant to many of the observed classrooms (though less so in the main study History classroom). When teachers adopt the role of literacy definer, pupils appear to be exposed to print and the actions of reading and writing as functional social activities guided by knowledgeable adults.

Teacher as Literate Adult

The final literacy position which the case study teachers appear to occupy is that of literate adult. Teacher literate self-image affects the literacy practices within each classroom. This finding supports Meek's argument (1983, p.222) that teachers are the most significant variable in a child's literacy experiences. The opportunities the teacher offers, the way these are structured and teacher identity as author or performer determine the understanding of and proficiency in literacy which a student may develop.

During focused interviews teacher informants rationalise their literacy practices as the product of their own schooling, teacher training and culture. For example, Mr Snowden ascribes his didactic, authoritative style, where the text is definitive, to his grammar school education. For Miss Somerville, Mrs Shepherd and Mr Samson their negative self-image of poor literacy skills, and remembered difficulties as pupils themselves, influence their approach:

“I was never very good at reading. I still have that fear that I may not be able to read the text properly. I always think, ‘Oh God! What’s this text going to do for us?’”

[Semi-structured interview, Miss Somerville, p.4]

This teacher’s lessons are characterised by pre-reading activities, establishing purposes for reading and explicit attention to the different textual elements.

The fascination which words hold for Miss Seymour and Mrs Paige permeates their lessons and is distinctive of the literacy practices within their classrooms:

“I’m into words with all the years....I try to point out that we use different, special words, difficult words so that we can use one to save using ten instead. I always keep my old school dictionary in the classroom and we use it a lot.”

[Semi-structured interview, Miss Seymour, p.2]

In these History lessons much time is spent defining words, examining derivations and compiling a glossary.

PUPIL LITERACY

Teacher literacy is not, however, the only important literate voice contributing to classroom literacy practices. Also informative is the position of pupil literacy, literacy roles and how pupils position themselves within “the school metaphor of reading and its corresponding areas of knowledge” (Gregory, 1992, p.43). Pupil positions in both phases are delimited by teacher practices and by the asymmetric power relationships, for as Street (1995, p.140) suggests “every literacy is learnt in a specific context in a particular way and the modes of learning, the social relationships of student to teacher are modes of socialisation and acculturation”. Teacher control of classroom discourse, intricately tied as it is to the control of knowledge and learning, largely restricts pupils to the

position of novice or apprentice learners, with occasional opportunity to occupy other literate roles. The notion of “legitimate peripheral participation” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.29) indicates a possible source of discontinuity in literacy practices for, as newcomers, Y7 pupils need to master the skills and knowledge requisite to participation in their new literacy community.

Pupil as Novice Learner

In these classrooms the status of “novice learner” involves positions as respondent or questioner, and once as challenger of the dominant literacy practices. To enact these roles appropriately in their new literacy community Y7 pupils must learn when to answer or stay silent, what type of answer to offer and when they may raise questions or engage in open, exploratory dialogue.

Greatest continuity exists in pupil position as respondents, allowed to contribute short, generally single word, factual answers within the teacher-orchestrated IRF sequence. Such rehearsal pertains to the “game” of “doing a lesson”; answers demonstrate factual or literal recall of information already known to the teacher (Collins, 1987, pp.74-5). Continuity exists in pupil role as answerers of particular types of text-related questions (“What does.....mean?”, “Why did....?”), rather than as askers of questions (Freebody and Luke, 1990, p.12). Both Y6 and Y7 pupils demonstrate awareness of teacher role as elicitor of summaries and their own role as recallers of specific textual information.

In some of the classrooms pupils occupy the role of questioner, although principled questions (Edwards and Mercer, 1987, pp.72-3) occur relatively rarely. Pupils appear to assume this position rather than it being created or encouraged by teacher practice. Three slightly different questioner roles emerge from the data. The most frequent, especially in Y7, is the pupil checking procedural matters, whether through genuine uncertainty or as task avoidance:

“Do we have to write the key idea?”

[7X2 Geography Observation 4, p.3]

after six months of copying the key idea for each geography topic is not a “real” question. Ritual questions related to the work’s content are heard in some secondary lessons, checking response veracity: “It rains more in Manchester than here. Is that the answer to Q.3?”. Such questions are more an expression of concern to respond appropriately than a request for knowledge. Finally, extremely rarely, a pupil raises questions or ideas which demonstrate inquisitiveness or thoughtfulness. For example in a traditional question-answer session during a lesson on Roman entertainment, the tone changes noticeably when one girl introduces her own question: “Do they still use the Colosseum to do other sports?”. An instance of genuine enquiry, this results in lively debate over whether ancient buildings should be rebuilt or modernised.

Pupil as User of Institutional Discourse

Occasionally pupils assume the literate discourse of the institution. Pupil use of “teacherly discourse” during group work is predictable given Haworth’s suggestion (1999, p.101) that the conventions of teacher-directed whole class instruction percolate through pupils’ words since this is the authoritative text which positions them, but could also reflect how successfully the teacher has handed over responsibility for learning (Geekie and Raban, 1993). This feature was found to be more prevalent among primary literacy practices, (in fact was not encountered in Y7 until groupwork was introduced in late February). Y6 Group Reading offers an interesting example since, although pupil literacy was dominant within discussion of and response to the story, teacher literacy served as model for task organisation:

“We got to p.32. We’ll read two paragraphs each. Kaylee you start reading.”

[Y6 Main Observation 3, p.3]

Pupil as Text-user

Despite text being central to so many observed lessons (especially in Y7), positioning of pupils as “readers” is rare. As code breaker (Freebody and Luke, 1990, pp.7-9), the role offering greatest continuity, pupils use decoding skills to read aloud (as happens in both phases), or silently (a more regular feature of the primary experience). During the question and answer framework of interaction around text pupils are also positioned as text participants. Comprehension skills, albeit generally at literal level, are needed to respond effectively in secondary subject lessons or when learning to read non-fiction texts in the primary school. Only Miss Somerville explicitly encourages pupils to position themselves as text users, asking “What will this text do for me?” and only in Y7 History lessons, during examination of primary sources, are pupils positioned as text analysts, encouraged to read critically and made aware that “all texts are crafted objects, written by people with particular orientations to the information” (Freebody and Luke, 1990, p.13). Y7 pupils therefore experience a wider range of reader roles.

Research-related literacy practices also appear to differ, Y6 pupils not being observed to engage in research. Secondary pupils are positioned as information retrievers when asked to select relevant information from the text to explain actions (e.g. Claudius’ motives for conquering Britain) or to illustrate a point of view (e.g. whether the Roman practice of slavery was good or bad), but such activities arise from whole class discussion of the relevant text. More open-ended research activities are even rarer, but were witnessed in library “quizzes” on the Romans and earthquakes and research homeworks e.g. “other volcanic eruptions”. Pupil reluctance to use reference books, preferring to rely on existing knowledge is noticeable; perhaps the paucity of opportunity to utilise research skills results in poor self-identity as researchers. Miss Somerville does however position 7T pupils as readers developing research skills when she describes them as “picky” because they are becoming selective about which text offers relevant information.

Pupil as Literate Individual

Teacher literacy may be the authoritative, dominant literacy in these classrooms, but nevertheless each pupil draws on his/her own literacy to make personal sense of the literacy practices within which s/he is situated.

a) Using own voice

Language (and literacy) only truly “becomes one’s own” when the reader/hearer is enabled to make the text personally meaningful through interaction and reflection (Bakhtin, 1981, pp.293-4). How extensive is this experience in these classrooms? In Geography pupils are encouraged to draw on personal experience to make meaning of geographical concepts newly encountered in the text:

“Sir, we were sitting in the living room at Christmas and the window blew in.” [7X1 Geography Observation 1, p.6]

Teacher acceptance of and development of this theme through personal anecdote indicates to pupils that anecdotes are relevant knowledge and encourages the development of a community of enquiry. Mr Severn explicitly positions pupils as literate individuals within this community who engage in the joint construction of knowledge:

“You’ve just explained all this from your own knowledge.
You’ve told me how to answer the questions.”

[7X1 Geography Observation 3, p.2]

Similarly in History pupil social behaviour is drawn on to foster understanding of the actions of William I:

“If there were three friends and they were always chatting and didn’t get on with their work, what would the teacher do?”

“He’d split them up.”

“Right, he’d split them up. And that’s just what King William did.”

[7Y History Observation 1, p.6]

Such opportunities were observed more frequently in the Y7 classrooms, perhaps due to the differing nature of texts and purposes for reading, therefore this may present an area of discontinuity.

Focus on word definition also positions pupils as literate individuals, learners capable of understanding and explaining “difficult” or subject specific words. Y7 pupils define terms related to settlement, the feudal system or the Roman army, while in Y6 spelling lessons pupils are encouraged to relate words to personal experience (although even here the role of teacher as authority intrudes):

Teacher: “What’s pneumonia?”

Laurie : “If you’re outside and it’s cold and you haven’t got lots of clothes you can catch pneumonia.”

Teacher: “So it’s an illness, a serious disease.”

[Y6 Main, Observation 5, p.2]

Such use of personal or subject language, which affects learning (Rothery, 1996) and the development of literate identity, offers an element of cross-phase continuity even though there is discontinuity in the purpose for learning such vocabulary.

b) Pupil literacy practices

Pupils are further positioned as literate individuals when asked to complete tasks involving reading or writing. Even though lesson time is spent preparing pupils for these tasks and the teachers are often quite prescriptive in their instructions concerning the required literacy approach, pupils engage with the tasks differently (Lave, 1992, p.82). However, these differences were most noticeable in Y7, possibly because of the “individual” rather than group or shared nature of activities. Every pupil brings a different set of knowledge, experience and understanding about literacy to each literacy task. The examples in Appendix D (also demonstrating the analytic process) illustrate how pupils’ “members’ resources” (Fairclough, 1989, p.24) and reader attitudes (Hall,

1994, pp.209-11) determine the sense each pupil makes of the text and the task and how their different skills, abilities and background knowledge interact with the topic and structure of different texts and with the purpose, explicitness and cognitive demands of the tasks, to enable different pupils to experience success on different occasions (Hutson, 1987, pp.230-1).

TEXT LITERACY

Although it is often difficult to separate the authority of the text from the authority of the teacher, since (as discussed above) the teacher uses the text to reinforce his/her own authority (Baker and Freebody, 1989, p.264), the text nevertheless emerges as a powerful “voice” within these literacy practices, a voice to be understood and emulated, the voice at the centre of interaction and learning. This is perhaps one of the greatest areas of discontinuity since in the primary classrooms, where focus was on skill development, the text was less central than in the content-oriented learning process of secondary lessons.

Text as Authoritative

The secondary school textbook is treated as a source of authority, as a “material artefact” (Luke, Fraser and Luke, 1989, p.256) which teachers and pupils reify, consult, treat as an “expert”, and (almost invariably) believe unquestioningly. There is little sense here that texts have “no single, unproblematical meaning” (Graddol, 1994, p.14). Video, CD-ROM and photographs are equally powerful. Miss Somerville reifies text most. In a lesson about the eruption of Mt Etna she not only frames the text as authoritative by her introduction:

“We want to look at the book to see what the experts say.”

[7T Geography Observation 7, p.2]

but also uses the text to invoke her own authority over the content area (Brilliant-Mills, 1994, p.318). She knows that this text is an important information source. Its presentation of school knowledge (content) within a school technology (literacy) makes it unsurprising it should be treated as an authoritative source of both content and method (Baker and Freebody, 1989, p.263). When a word is unfamiliar the dictionary is the authoritative point of reference, regularly consulted by Mrs Paige and her pupils to define spellings and by Miss Seymour to make historical vocabulary accessible to Y7 pupils. In Geography this role is fulfilled by the glossary.

Text authority is further evidenced in pupil written work. In some secondary subjects pupils copy the text because they know it gives the “correct” teacher-desired answer, yet admit they learn more when using their own words. On other occasions pupil writing reflects the register and style of the authoritative text; they use book language; and textual influence is discernible in oral interaction e.g. biblical phrases entering spoken discourse.

Meek (1996, p.159) suggests that literacy practices and knowledge of the reading process are learned from the texts we read. However, in these classrooms it is difficult to determine whether the greatest influence on pupils’ literacy practices is how the “text teaches” and serves as a model or how teacher mediation of that text defines what pupils take from it.

Text as Resource

Teachers and pupils also position texts as a resource, not only published texts but also, in Y7, pupil texts are accorded authority as a record of learning, to be consulted to help with a new task:

“Look back in your exercise book to where we wrote down the key questions. What did we want to find out?”

[7T Geography Observation 1, p.2]

or as facts to be learned to demonstrate “knowledge”:

“Read through the work in your exercise book. You need to learn all the information about the Romans.”

[7C History Observation 7, p.1]

It is positioned thus by teacher instruction, rather than automatic pupil practice.

Whereas lessons that centre round a single text position the text as authoritative, in History and Geography the simultaneous use of a range of texts more appositely positions them as a resource, items to consult, extract evidence from and synthesise into a response. Pupil attention is specifically drawn to the need to read all sources carefully to determine whether information about Julius Caesar is fact or opinion and to using the Urban Trail, EQIS sheet, textbook and exercise book when completing the *Settlement Report*. In the primary lessons multiple texts were not used, rather text was treated purely as a resource for the development of reading skills.

OTHER LITERACIES

The fourth literacy “voice” affecting classroom literacy practices is composed of many different literacies from the wider world of education, home and community. However, the extent and nature of their influence vary.

School Literacy

Firstly there is the literacy of the particular institution; teacher language is not the only authoritative voice within the school. Local institutional literacy, (as epitomised through registration, letters home, rewards, assessment and record-keeping practices and the homework diary which doubles as prayer-book), intrudes as another powerful and influential voice. The print environment, the language of the walls and doors, further positions pupils. Signs and labels such

as “6JNB Classroom”, “Please ring the bell and wait.”, “Wonder and awe in God’s presence” all serve to instruct and position. Street and Street (1991, p.156) suggest that an examination of how school or classroom space is constructed aids understanding of the ideology of language within the school. The message in both phases appears to be that although pupils have their own space, they are subject to more powerful influences. Secondary noticeboards tend to inform and position pupils as compliant rule-followers (through information and rules), while primary noticeboards position pupils as learners (through displays which celebrate pupil work, instruct and challenge).

School literacy practices also position teachers: a teacher’s preferred practices may not accord with the school choice of reading scheme or group reading approach, or be attuned to departmental literacy practices (Luke, 1988, p.157). Mrs Paige had reverted to the group reading approach used in her previous school, believing that its co-operative self-directed style developed reading skills more effectively than teacher hearing one group read while other groups completed worksheets. Mrs Shepherd admitted to disquiet concerning the RE textbook and departmental examination style, while Mr Severn’s preference for enquiry and exploration was constrained by the literal level, prescriptive nature of Geography department worksheets.

Literacy of the Educational World

Secondly, classroom literacy practices are influenced by expectations from the educational world beyond the school. The sociological perspective on literacy instruction draws attention to how use of particular reading schemes or pedagogical approaches formalises student/teacher roles, restricting teacher action. Understanding of the effect of NLS requirements on Mrs Paige’s pedagogical style is aided by Luke’s explanation (1991, p.19) of how teachers’

guides, syllabuses and INSET materials prescribe classroom literacy practices. Nor are these teachers free to choose how to present information to pupils; their effectiveness as teachers is measured by their pupils' success in examinations. The influence of external literacy is found in both phases; primary teachers instruct pupils in the language and literacy style of SATs while Y7 teachers focus on examination command words or offer GCSE style examinations:

“I deliberately included source questions because this is a type of question they will encounter at GCSE.”

[7C History Observation 7, p.5]

Furthermore, teachers and pupils in both phases encounter the unfamiliar literacy of the LEA transition module, wherein sentence stem syntax does not match pupil language patterns and the emphasis on text types presents an unfamiliar language feature to teachers. Here both are positioned as learners by this external literacy as they struggle to accommodate its new demands within their own literacy practices.

Relationship between home and school literacy

There is a symbiotic relationship between the literacy practices of home and school: neither exists in isolation. Practices in some of the secondary classrooms occasionally evidence recognition that pupils operate in a range of literate domains (Barton, Bloome and Street, E825 Audio-cassette 2, Band 3) with pupils explicitly positioned as members of different literate communities and this difference valued and drawn on as a resource. Mr Severn in particular seems to have implicit awareness of the pupils differing “members’ resources” (Fairclough, 1989, p.24) and strives to capitalise on pupil home and primary school literacy practices.

School literacy practices also percolate into family life (Street and Street, 1991). Just as the school focus at transition moves from learning to read to

reading to learn (Meek, 1997, p.36) so the influence of schooled literacy on home practices alters. The checking of spellings, hearing the child read or setting writing tasks, characteristic of the Y6 family role, changes into support for the child as researcher. Researching the Y7 pupil's life history involves the family in an exploration of their literacy heritage through document and visual record; writing an essay about slavery involves use of CD-ROM and examination of paternal school books. The uses students make of literacy in non-school contexts e.g. "research" and story writing (see Chapter 5) are important and show not only what they take from schooled practices (Sola and Bennett, 1994, p.134) but perhaps also the uses of literacy which they believe appropriate to mention in a "school" interview.

This chapter has illustrated how the different literate voices of teacher, pupil, text and the world beyond the classroom contribute and intertwine to make the discrete literacy practices of each classroom. Although foregrounding the dominance of teacher literacy in both phases, the chapter highlights discontinuities, especially related to textual voice and usage and pupil status as questioner. In the following chapter attention turns to the pedagogical approaches found within the literacy practices of each phase.

*Chapter 7***How is literacy developed?*****Data Analysis and Interpretation***

Analysis of the differences in literacy practices between the primary and secondary phases is not complete until the respective pedagogical approaches have been examined closely. If, as MacGinitie and MacGinitie (1986, p.257) argue, “students learn what the curriculum emphasises”, it is important to establish what messages about literacy these pedagogical approaches give.

Discussion of *Whose Literacy?* (Chapter 6) foregrounded the dominance of teacher literacy, thereby attesting to the contribution of the teacher’s underlying beliefs about literacy to how the literacy practices are developed. The close relationship between the themes identified in *What is Literacy?* (Chapter 5) and those emerging here is easily discernible.

What teaching and learning styles and experiences characterise these literacy practices? Which themes found in contemporary pedagogical research are embodied within or assist interpretation of the observed practices? Several themes, illuminative of how literacy is developed, emerge from analysis of the ethnographic data. Each represents an approach or teaching style common to several or all of the observed teachers, but the extent to which each teacher’s practice fits the description varies both within and between lessons, depending on lesson content and learning objectives. Initial discussion of the explicit teaching of literacy as a skill (*literacy through directed study*) contrasts with lessons about literacy implicit in subject teaching (*literacy through subject learning*). Attention then turns to the place of talk (*literacy through interaction*), the genre approach (*literacy through text type*) and metacognition (*literacy through modelling*) within the literacy practices (issues foregrounded

in Chapter 3). Finally, the relationship between new learning and existing knowledge is considered (*literacy through contextualisation*).

This chapter, while using the same processes of data, time, space and methodological triangulation as Chapters 5 and 6, reinforces the importance, within this study, of theoretical triangulation (Cohen and Manion, 1996, p.236). Findings discussed within each of Chapters 5-7 emerge from the same data sets; however, each reflects differing but complementary perspectives on that data, thus enriching and adding depth to the “thick description”. There is particularly close correlation between the findings concerning what literacy is for classroom participants (Chapter 5) and how literacy is developed within these classrooms (this chapter). For example, the theme of *literacy as a set of skills to be learned* as a description of the model of literacy underpinning some classroom literacy practices (Chapter 5) is here operationalised through *literacy through directed study*, while the notion of *literacy through interaction* (this chapter) reflects the themes of *literacy as meaning maker* and *literacy as social experience* (Chapter 5).

LITERACY THROUGH DIRECTED STUDY

Clear differences emerge between the pedagogical approach to and uses of literacy in the two phases (as Appendix E’s longer extracts illustrate). The style of teaching observed in some of these classrooms demonstrates a prime concern, especially in Y6, with the explicit instruction of literacy as a finite set of skills, as in the “autonomous” model of literacy (Street, 1984, 1997).

Two principal differences emerge in the ways literacy is used and thus in how skills are developed. These resemble Barton’s distinction (1996, pp.52-56) between literacy as an “object of study” (explicitly talked about, taught and central to many classroom activities), and literacy (at home) as a tool “used to

get other things done” (not the main objective of the activity), for an emerging area of discontinuity concerns the place accorded to literacy and the way it is developed, with primary literacy practices treating literacy as an object of study and the secondary practices using literacy as a tool for learning subject content (see below). Data seem to confirm the views of Webster, Beveridge and Reed (1996) and Meek (1997) concerning movement of literacy from curriculum centre to periphery and transition from learning to read and write at primary school to reading and writing to learn at secondary, although occasionally direct teaching of literacy skills occurs in this phase also. As Marshall and Brindley (1998) suggest, each phase operates to a different model of English, but whereas their primary skills model resembles observed Y6 practices, their secondary literature model only partially reflects observed Y7 practices in English lessons and takes no account of literacy experiences within other secondary curriculum areas.

In the Y6 classrooms there is direct tuition of both reading and writing, with development of specific literacy skills as key lesson objectives. Texts are read for skill development rather than content. This is true not only of group reading sessions, where the emphasis is on peer support for accurate decoding and familiarisation with technical book language e.g. blurb, classic novel, characterisation, but also of whole class reading, e.g. emphasis on recount text structure when reading *The Story of Conal Byrne*. Accurate spelling is accorded high priority, with the “look-cover-write-check” routine even given lesson status by pupils [Estelle, Y6 Focused Group Interview p.7] and there is explicit instruction of the “recipe” to structure a recount text. Skill focus was equally prominent in the Y6 Pilot classroom where DARTs activities were used to prepare students for the (teacher perceived) reading demands of the secondary curriculum.

Direct teaching of literacy skills, although not central to the observed secondary lessons, does occur incidentally in most subjects. In Geography Miss Somerville

explicitly teaches how to extract information and develop from draft to final version, ensuring that key subject vocabulary is used appropriately when writing a report (see Appendix E, extract 3). Miss Spark teaches about adjectives during a creative writing session although her principal aim is to encourage reflection and personal expression:

Teacher re-reads the description of the sunset, stressing “beautiful” and “orange” and asks pupils to identify other descriptive “bits”. Having established familiarity with the term “adjective” she requires pupils to write their own descriptive poem reflecting on their own “Natural Highs”.

[7.2 English, Observation 1, p.2]

Not only the amount of direct tuition of literacy differs, but also the usage of literacy teaching lexical items. Whereas specialist language and literacy terms occur in most observed Y6 lessons, such usage is only found in approximately half the Y7 lessons, many of these containing only reference to “paragraphs” during oral reading. Reading, especially reading aloud, may be common to both phases, but explicit mention of reading strategies occurs only in the primary classrooms. Y6 pupils are told to sound out, “use your phonics”, skim, read closely, “read in a focused manner for detail” and “continually look back at the text to check”. Reference to text units ((writing) sentences and (reading) paragraphs) and to punctuation (full stops and capital letters) occurs in both phases, but in Y6 direct speech and question marks are also a focus of study. The only use of terms related to text structure (e.g. events, outcome, conclusion), text type (recount text), forms of language (idiom, accent, formal, Standard English) and literary devices (simile, metaphor, cliché) occur during Y6 lessons. However, these are not part of the teacher’s normal repertoire, but rather represent the external literacies of the *Transition Module* and NLS. Terms occurring only in Y7 lessons related to the drafting process (first draft, edit), poetry (rhyme, verse), syntax (adjective) and information retrieval (contents page, subject index, glossary, alphabetical order); further reflecting

the changing role of literacy to a tool for subject learning. Although these terms are mainly used by teachers, pupils have the knowledge and capacity to use them appropriately when circumstances allow. Y6 pupils demonstrate knowledge about language in a lesson on dialect and of book parts during group reading. Some Y7 pupils use a range of terms when collaborating to edit each other's biographical stories. The data therefore suggest that pupils have greater opportunity to hear and use literacy lexical items during Y6 than Y7.

LITERACY THROUGH SUBJECT LEARNING

However in the secondary phase direct teaching of literacy is less common. Given the structure of the secondary curriculum with its subject compartmentalisation, it is hardly surprising that the major way literacy is developed in these secondary classrooms is through its use as a tool to gain or demonstrate subject knowledge. This is not to imply that secondary teachers deliberately set out to teach literacy skills (although some, including Miss Somerville, now aim for this due to their involvement with the KS3 Literacy Project), but rather that the nature of tasks set and the general teaching style do actually develop literacy skills. During focused interviews Y7 pupils commented on improvement in their reading as a result of reading secondary school textbooks. This focus on learning literacy through subject content offers a major aspect of discontinuity with primary experience wherein mastery of "content" (such as *Rainforests* in the pilot study) was of lesser importance than learning how to "read" the text. Such discontinuity supports the notion of the "difficult transition from primary to secondary school language work" due to the "explosion of concepts and language introduced by the specialist secondary school subjects" referred to by Hawkins (1984, p.4, cited in Fairclough, 1995, p.223) and of the need for students to develop the specific register of secondary education, learning to "read and write the texts by which they 'get into' these subjects" (Macken-Horarik, 1996, p.232). In these secondary schools, literacy

is “used to get other things done” (Barton, 1996), with the emphasis very much on reading to learn (Meek, 1997) and the assumption that this is a familiar learning style for pupils.

The notion that secondary subject learning presents literacy difficulties to pupils is nothing new. Y7 pupil informants demonstrate sensitivity to the growing complexity of the language demands made by subject texts (a feature identified by Veal and Coffin (1996)). History texts present the greatest difficulties because of the “language used” (the subject specific vocabulary) and the layout. Geography also presented literacy problems through its specialised concepts, vocabulary and interpretation of visual images. Van Leeuwen and Humphrey (1996, pp.29-30) argue that geography learning is mediated through language (especially textbooks) and that therefore students need to become geographically literate, to master the specialised register of geography, to interpret the verbal and visual information in maps, charts and diagrams, in order to learn the subject.

In the secondary classrooms, lessons that were not text-based (whether textbook, worksheet or teacher-generated) were rare, whereas observed primary lessons (except for the “Literacy Hour”) were more likely to consist of teacher talk and pupil activity not centred around a shared text. However, this preponderance of text-based lessons does not necessarily contradict MacGinitie and MacGinitie’s suggestion (1986, p.264) that many students do little reading in content areas, since hearing the text read aloud and discussed enables pupils to answer literal comprehension questions without reading the text for themselves, a common practice in Mr Snowdon’s Geography lessons.

Although central to secondary lessons, text usage varies. The nature of the text and the way the teacher structures the interaction around it combine to create a musical score (Barr, 1987, p.150) that orchestrates the reading, both the process and the meanings that are created. Sometimes the course of instruction

is influenced by the “text as organising rubric” (ibid.), while at others the level of text difficulty influences the form of instruction. In Geography the text is treated as a source of unquestioned knowledge:

“Let’s read what the experts say.”

[Miss Somerville: 7T Geography, Observation 7, p.2]

and used to inform pupils, for example about volcanic eruptions, thus offering pupils a “knowledge of the world” framework for reading (Cochran-Smith, 1986, p.48). In History, texts satisfy a variety of purposes: description and explanation of events and source evidence. They are read not only to learn the facts, but also to understand cause and consequence, the difference between fact and opinion and to encourage critical questioning. Textual information is used for debate and discussion (“curricular content as a component of interaction”, ibid.) as well as for literal comprehension:

“What year did Claudius invade Britain?”

“Which do you think was the most important motive? Why?”

[7T History, Observation 2, p.4]

Texts in RE are usually read for familiarisation with biblical stories:

“This is the story of Mary and about how she is going to

become the mother of Jesus.” [7C RE, Observation 6, p.2]

or moral stories (*Old Dag*) (“content as a condition of learning”) rather than for examination of writing style, but the listening situation also develops awareness of how to respond as members of a reading audience, how to look and talk like readers (Cochran-Smith, 1985, p.22). Teacher comments reveal awareness of the inadequacy of the textbooks, with their piecemeal snippets of information, as models of teaching and learning (Langer and Applebee, 1987, p.148). It is this perception that results in their assumption of the role of text mediator (discussed in Chapter 6) and production of their own texts.

Secondary subject lessons offer opportunities for pupils to experience and use a variety of reading strategies (such as those referred to by Meek, 1996, p.167).

Locating the information to answer factual questions in History and Geography

requires textual scanning and spatial reading. Radial reading is used for a range of purposes. During research into life in Rome pupils flicked through the book to locate appropriate sections or determine relevance; like the pupils described by Wray and Lewis (1997, pp.69-70) they can describe how to use contents and index but do not practise this knowledge. Reading is interrupted to consult the glossary (Geography) or dictionary (English, History). This offers further discontinuity since although Y6 pupils were encouraged to consult the dictionary, no other opportunities for spatial or radial reading were observed. Whereas for Y7 pupils the prime focus for engagement with text is informational, for primary pupils it is recreational and performative (levels of text engagement suggested by Wells and Chang-Wells (1992, pp.138-40)). The most prevalent style of reading in primary was the "close read" or "lost in a book" style where pupils were encouraged to read uninterrupted, (a rare occurrence in secondary, only witnessed in one Set 4 English lesson). When texts were read together however, the Y6 teacher constantly interrupted the reading to explain words or encourage pupils to consult the dictionary. The predominance of narrative reading (for pleasure, in group reading and in the "Literacy Hour") fostered understanding of story and narrative structure. Observation (more recently) of a "Literacy Hour" taught by Mrs Paige suggests Y6 are now being acquainted with a framework for reading as "knowledge of literary conventions".

Although incidental teaching of literacy through subject learning is a major characteristic of the observed secondary literacy practices, there were also occasional occurrences in primary subject lessons. During topic work on Euro '96 Y6 pupils extracted information from tables, learned to interpret abbreviations and (some) consulted encyclopaedias [Y6 Pilot, Observation 3, pp.2-5], while Y6 pupils in the main study were encouraged to use mathematical language and develop their own semiotic system of signs, symbols and words to record the findings of a mathematical investigation *On the Bus*.

LITERACY THROUGH TEXT-TYPE

Discontinuity between phases not only concerns text role (as object of study or source of subject information) but also the text types. However, the advent of the NLS means study of text types should become a feature of Y6 practices. As indicated by Barton and Hamilton (1998, Ch.12) texts are an important element within the literacy practices of a community, therefore analysis of cross-phase differences in text-types proves informative.

The genre approach (discussed in Chapter 3) was expected to exert some influence on the pedagogical approaches in the case study classrooms given its privileged status as theoretical framework for the LEA Transition Module. However, both observation and information obtained from pupil informants confirm Sawyer and Watson's suggestion (1988, p.46) that the texts experienced in primary school are mainly fiction: "real books" read for pleasure or skill development or stories from the reading scheme. Pupils are very familiar with narrative, a powerful, knowledge-carrying form (Heath, 1996, pp.15-16) which engages the pupil's affective response (Egan, 1986, p.xiii), but lack experience of the expository modes of secondary subject lessons. Occasionally a non-fiction text, such as *Recount Texts*, is used but this is usually a teacher-produced worksheet. Pupil comments reinforce the impression that textbooks are not a feature of primary practice:

"I didn't learn much History and Geography at primary school. We didn't have many lessons and we never had textbooks like here."

[Edward, Literacy Log Focused interview 2, p.4]

Pupil familiarity with the subject labels and ability to show their History work from the Autumn Term (Main Study) supports beliefs concerning the infrequency of such subject teaching; no History or Geography was taught in either primary school during the Spring or Summer Terms in which observation took place. Subject teachers appear to lack awareness of their pupils'

inexperience of textbook usage, Mr Snowdon expressing amazement at pupils' unfamiliarity with the "many attractive KS2 texts".

Secondary textbooks present a mixture of text types. The narrative style, familiar from primary, is still encountered in English (*George's Marvellous Medicine*) but report, explanation, procedural and discussion texts are commonplace in History and Geography. Often several styles are encountered within a particular unit, especially in History texts, where each source can offer a different style. Secondary texts also place greater emphasis on visual literacy, with pupils expected to read and interpret maps, diagrams, pictures and photographs as well as prose text. Pupils' comments on their unfamiliarity with (and unpreparedness for) this variety reflect the discontinuity in text type, style and teaching focus referred to by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996). For example an able reader spoke about difficulties coping with History texts:

"The words are difficult to understand and often the writing and the picture or source are on different pages and it is difficult to know what the main text is referring to."

[Simon, Literacy Log Focused interview 3, p.6]

Although Wyatt-Smith (1997, p.11) argues that teachers should explicitly teach the text-types required within their subjects, observation revealed little evidence of subject teachers striving to aid pupil understanding by teaching the underlying structure of their texts. Only Miss Somerville (Geography, Main Study) shows awareness of this notion and follows the example of Cook and Mayer (1988) in domain specific teaching of literacy skills (Appendix F illustrates a pupil's perspective on this approach). Even she places more emphasis on teaching structures for written responses than on textual analysis of source materials. Pupils do not examine and deconstruct a model text before using the writing frame designed to elicit the appropriate written text form.

Secondary lessons (Main Study) also appear to pose greater demands in the variety of text-types which pupils are expected to produce. Y6 pupils described occasions when they had written “stories”, real life recounts (both personal experience and historical) and a project on healthy eating. During observations they only wrote sentences and planned a recount. However, the secondary pupils were seen to write stories (*The Well of Life*), poems (*Christmas Thank Yous*), diaries (*Diary of a Roman Slave*), reports (*Settlement Report*), lists, recipes (*My Medicine*), newspaper articles (*Pompeii - a Town Frozen in Time*), explanations (*Birmingham - a Multicultural City*), discussions (*Why was the Roman Army so Successful?*) and real life recounts (autobiography); and to design posters (*Improving Small Heath*). Writing frames were offered as a scaffold to structure extended writing tasks, but only Miss Somerville gave instruction in their use (see Appendix F); however, Miss Seymour attempted to explain their structure:

Teacher likens a writing frame to a picture frame in that it provides an outline: “The beginning sentence for each paragraph needs details alongside it, just as you would put a picture or photos inside the frame.”

[7C History, Observation 2, p.3]

Miss Seymour also capitalised on familiarity with narrative in tasks such as *A Day in the Life of a Roman Soldier*, while the *Zafferana newspaper report* offers interesting insights into pupil ability to produce different text forms. Narrative accounts of the eruption were usually better shaped, more cohesive and fluent than the stilted explanations of how a volcano works, (where pupils often copied extracts of unlinked text from the textbook).

LITERACY THROUGH INTERACTION

Texts may take central place in many lessons but it is perhaps the interaction around those texts which makes the major contribution to literacy development.

It has already been argued that literacy (and literacy teaching and learning) is a social process, a notion which both rejects by implication the idea of it being a purely cognitive or individual accomplishment and also foregrounds the importance of the role of talk within literacy practices: “education is a dialogue” (Wells and Chang-Wells, 1992, p.33). Many observed literacy events were constructed through conversational interactions in which discussion of vocabulary and content offered pupils opportunity to make meaning and develop shared understanding; definitions of literacy were established; ways of engaging with written language were promoted; and the “authority for interpretation and meaning was located” (Bloome and Green, 1992, p.52). Although the style of interaction varies between classrooms, the very fact that text is treated as a matter for discussion and that reading does not become a solitary activity affords some continuity. Examination of how instructional conversations differ across settings, inform learning to read and write, and construct knowledge, reveals continuities and discontinuities across phases.

In both phases interaction around texts presents as a means of developing common knowledge (Edwards and Mercer, 1987) not only of content but also of ways to extract meaning (a concept discussed in Chapter 3). Teacher’s questions serve to focus attention on important aspects and model a method of reading. In History Miss Seymour demonstrates the importance of monitoring one’s understanding of the text and taking action to ensure this:

During the reading she makes some brief asides to explain or comment e.g. “Gaul, that’s what they called France” or asks pupils to check their understanding e.g. “What’s an empire?”

[7T History, Observation 1, p.3]

In Geography Miss Somerville asks pupils to explain the text:

Mark reads aloud the entry for 16th December.

Teacher: What happened then?

Mark: Lava starts to come out of cracks.

[7T Geography, Observation 8, p.4]

Y6 pupils are offered similar, though less frequent, opportunities. During the “Literacy Hour” they summarised the plot of *Martin’s Mice* and explored the meaning of unfamiliar words such as “foraging” [Y6 Main, Observation 6, p.2].

Text interaction in both phases sometimes exemplifies approaches within the EXIT model (Wray and Lewis, 1997) or offers “scaffolded reading experiences” (Graves and Graves, 1995; discussed in Chapter 3). New topics often begin with the activation of prior knowledge (Wray and Lewis, 1997), using participants’ knowledge (Hanks, 1992, p.45) as building blocks:

Pupils are given an information sheet entitled *Recount Texts* and asked to read it in pairs. “You’ve done lots of writing. Think about writing you’ve done through primary school. Say to yourself: ‘I definitely did one of these, it was.... Tell me some of the things that you have written in History, they are recounts of past events.’”

[Y6 Main, Observation 4, p.9]

Text-based lessons may open with an activity (e.g. brainstorm) designed to rouse interest or set a reading purpose:

“What we are going to do today is we are going to find out a little bit more about our city...about how it got its name.”

[7T Geography, Observation 3, p.3]

This is followed by discussion both during and after the reading. Finally the written task offers pupils the opportunity to reinforce the learning and to make their own meaning:

Class examine a map of the Roman Empire and suggest reasons why the empire might have declined; read and discuss Ch.7 “The End of the Roman Empire”; then do a brainstorm which forms notes in preparation for designing a poster to explain the fall of Rome.

[7T History, Observation 6, p.6]

A similar process was evident in the Y6 *Heraldry* lesson (pilot study, Appendix E Extract 1) where the class were introduced to the concept through a discussion on symbols, read and discussed the text and then completed a modelling exercise.

Whereas whole-class interaction around text centres on reading, individual teacher-pupil interactions about text often promote the writing process. Both phases make occasional use of oral prompts which act as an “external trigger of discourse production” (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1985, p.97), although the secondary teachers are more likely to offer writing frames.

Teachers modify the style of interaction to suit the requirements of particular learning situations, for example asking pupils to predict a story ending evokes a different learner-teacher-task relationship to that in which pupils are required to respond to literal comprehension questions, but each teacher has a preferred style, reflecting a different balance in the use of regulative and instructional registers. Boundary exchanges, which organise, frame and focus the topic under discussion, differ in form and function from teaching exchanges, such as IRF, which serve a more educational purpose (Willes, 1983, p.100). The interactions around text in these classrooms can be characterised in different ways. Both of the types described by Hughes and Westgate (1998) are present: “teacher-led” (particularly strongly used by Y6 teachers, Mr Severn, Miss Somerville and Miss Seymour) and “teacher-dominated” (Mr Snowdon). “Guided construction of knowledge” (Mercer, 1995) is found in the former. Miss Seymour, for instance, accepts pupil-initiated topics as worthy of consideration and the ensuing lively discussion encourages reading beyond the lines:

Leon : When do things become ancient?

Teacher treats this as a serious question and invites pupils to hypothesise.

[7T History, Observation 3, p.4]

Similarly Mr Severn explores pupil answers, drawing on relevant knowledge, consolidating, reviewing, reformulating and extending knowledge, (in the manner suggested by Langer and Applebee, 1987, p.41). In comparison the closed questions of Mr Snowdon present as an occasion for literal recall only, to “guess the word in teacher’s head”:

“What happens if a raindrop falls on concrete or tarmac?”

“It will dry up.”

This does not satisfy the teacher so he introduces the desired term himself, “There are two types of water run-off”.

[7X2 Geography, Observation 4, p.2]

These different types of dialogue are partly attributable to the different teaching styles associated with “asking” and “telling”. The former (exemplified by Mr Severn, Miss Seymour and Mrs Paige) is concerned with dispositional knowledge and knowledge production (knowing how) while the latter (exemplified by Mr Snowdon and Mr Samson) deals in propositional knowledge and knowledge transmission (knowing that) (Heap, 1985, pp.245-7). “Asking” reflects the need to start from existing pupil knowledge and to build on that knowledge using personal experience to make connections, whereas “telling” is used to ensure pupils record accurate information to learn for tests and also offers a control mechanism by ensuring that pupils are able to complete tasks. Thus although each style contributes to literacy development, each inducts pupils into a different model of literacy and develops different approaches to and understandings of the status of the written word.

Scaffolding interactions operated on two levels. The principal usage was to make tasks achievable by individual pupils. The primary teachers and Miss Somerville engaged (to differing degrees according to learner needs) in recruitment, reduction in degrees of freedom, direction maintenance, marking critical features, frustration control and demonstration (the six “scaffolding functions” identified by Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976, p.98). However, in Y7,

especially for Mr Severn, Miss Seymour and Mrs Shepherd, the purpose of scaffolding interactions was a different form of direction maintenance, encouraging pupils to build on previous success, explore and develop ideas.

LITERACY THROUGH MODELLING

In order to use the full potential of literacy as a resource to make sense of their lives (Barton and Hamilton, 1998, p.231) pupils need to experience using literacy in varied circumstances and, as “cultural apprentices” (Maybin, cited in Mercer, 1993, p.31), to witness literacy being used by others for real purposes. In both phases teachers offered role models as readers or writers, although often this seemed more incidental than deliberate, not indicative of teacher understanding of the role’s importance. The extent and nature of such modelling therefore varied greatly, with the strongest, most consistent models provided by Mrs Paige (writing reminders and developing vocabulary), Miss Somerville (reading as source of pleasure and authoritative information) and Miss Seymour (reading as deduction and exploration) and in the uses of *literacy as an organisational tool* (see Chapter 5).

Although no teacher was seen to present a role model for silent reading for pleasure, teachers did express interest in reading and model effective reading aloud. For example, Miss Somerville emphasised her enjoyment of reading when studying textbook information about zones of the city, offering conscious, cognitive apprenticeship for pupils as readers (Gregory, 1992, p.47):

“I’m going to read today ’cus you usually read for me and I like reading.”

[7T Geography, Observation 4, p.3]

(Appendix F provides evidence of pupil interpretation of this behaviour) and Mr Spooner modelled the use of appropriate intonation and expression when reading aloud from *Cider with Rosie*. Lewis and Wray (2000, pp.39-40) comment on the effectiveness of teacher oral reading as demonstration of what

the reader actually does. No explicit role models were offered for the writing process, only implicitly through incidental administrative tasks and oral response to written tasks.

Occasions of metacognitive modelling (see Chapter 3) occurred in each phase when the teachers foregrounded their cognitive processes (Flavell, 1976, p.232, cited in Garner, 1987, p.16) thus making their own literacy strategies explicit. Wray and Lewis (1997, p.74) stress the importance of making visible the thought processes underlying literacy tasks so that learning becomes principled rather than ritual. Mrs Paige explained, within her natural pedagogical approach, how she would approach problems, modelling strategies such as dictionary usage:

“Pneumatic. I’m not really sure what that means. I think I better look it up.” Teacher picks up a dictionary. “It starts with ‘p’ so it should be after the middle.” Turns pages, reading the initial letter or key word. “Paper, getting nearer, here we are: pneumatic.” Reads what it says then re-phrases.

[Y6 Main, Observation 5, p.7]

and how to explain understanding of a mathematical pattern. Miss Seymour also modelled the use of a dictionary when responding to a pupil query concerning the origin of the name “earth”, while Mrs Shepherd modelled her strategy for checking the spelling of an unfamiliar word.

LITERACY THROUGH CONTEXTUALISATION

All learning is situated (see Chapters 1 and 3). Texts read or created within the classroom draw on the contexts not only of the particular learning situation but also of the learner’s broader social, linguistic and psychological experience. However, within these classrooms differences are evident in the extent to which

the teachers attempt to contextualise literacy activities to make the text, task and the new learning more accessible to pupils.

Although Y6 pupils were expected to draw on existing knowledge (e.g. of dialect words or logos), explicit contextualisation was rare. Most literacy activities entailed seemingly decontextualised language activities, with occasional reference to a specific audience or context for writing e.g. writing questions about rainforests for peers or taking care with *Moving On Up* work to impress secondary teachers. However, as Mercer (1993, p.32) points out, no school learning task is completely decontextualised; whatever the activity, pupils had to draw on prior experience and knowledge of literacy practices in order to make sense of the task.

In contrast, explicit contextualisation presented as a predominant initiating feature within the observed secondary lessons, with teachers offering the type of topic relevant introduction Anstey and Freebody (1987, p.205) identified as enhancing scriptally-implicit comprehension. Context was invoked in a variety of ways. Firstly History, Geography and RE teachers introduced lessons using strategies such as brainstorm, KWL grids or quickfire questions to activate existing knowledge or link to the previous lesson (see above). It is difficult to assess how representative these strategies are of these teachers' literacy practices or how far they were influenced by the local KS3 Literacy Project and its emphasis on the EXIT model.

Secondly, direct reference is made to everyday experience. In Geography knowledge of football team names was drawn on to aid understanding of differences between towns and cities and in a lesson on settlement 7T were encouraged to relate photographs of the different zones of a city to familiar areas of their own city:

“What we’re going to do today is look at some photographs and see how the land is used in our city....With a partner look

at the photographs and discuss them. See what they show....In your exercise book write 'Zone A looks like...' and I want some real places, some places in [our city]."

[7T Geography, Observation 4, pp.2-3]

Sometimes the link is with direct experience. Mr Severn made pupils describe the weather in the playground at breaktime in order to explore their existing knowledge and vocabulary before introducing subject specific terms. Lankshear and Knobel's conjecture that meaning is made more effectively when readers "bring lived forms of experience and knowledge to bear on a text" (1998, p.163) was corroborated by the level of the ensuing text interaction and construction. Pupils were also encouraged to relate lesson topic to current affairs. Discussion of a recent hurricane led into study of a text about tropical islands [7.4 English Observation 1] and Mr Samson always referred to current events in his opening prayer, linking these to the lesson theme. Thus pupils were exposed to a model of reading wherein information from personal knowledge of the world is drawn upon to make sense of texts.

The third contextualisation strategy comprised explicit reference to learning in other subjects. As Barton and Hamilton (1998, p.282) suggest, meaning does not reside in the text alone but draws on the associated practices. Such reference might be to subject specific skills such as map-reading:

"It's going to appear a little bit like a Geography lesson...have a look at the map on p.10, use the key. Which colour tells what countries used to be controlled by Rome?"

[7T History, Observation 1, pp.1-2]

to "key" skills such as use of the library catalogue system, contents and index to locate information for the "History quiz"; or content. Studying volcanoes in Geography pupils were explicitly encouraged to recall knowledge of the Pompeii eruption to increase their understanding of the physical process and their empathy with the people of Zafferana.

The final, infrequent, strategy for contextualisation was to establish purpose prior to reading:

“We spend a lot of time looking at the text before we read, putting the toe in the bath before we jump in.... We ask, ‘Why are we going to read this, what is it going to tell us about?’

[Y7 Main, Semi-structured interview, Miss Somerville, p.3]

Thus there was a clear sense that these secondary teachers were attempting to link pupils’ understandings of events, vocabulary and concepts to broader cultural meaning systems (Gilbert, 1992, p.43), that context was “intermental” (Vygotsky, 1978, cited in Gutierrez, 1994, p.336), created through the joint interactions and understandings of participants. This emphasis presents as a discontinuity with the observed primary literacy practices.

It is, however, important to consider what counts as context. Erickson and Schultz argue social contexts consist of “mutually shared and ratified definitions of situation and in the social actions persons take on the basis of these definitions” (1977, p.148, cited in Floriani, 1994, p.241) and Mercer (1993, pp.31-2) suggests that what counts as context for learners is whatever they find personally relevant. If one accepts these definitions then the key cross-phase discontinuity in contextualisation would appear to be whether that contextualisation is teacher or pupil led. It is even possible that, unless the dialogue effectively constructs a “shared contextual framework”, teacher attempts to create a context could produce a barrier for those pupils not sharing the same terms of reference.

Chapters 5-7 have offered detailed analysis and interpretation of the findings, examining the beliefs underpinning the literacy practices, the influence of different literacies and issues of literacy and power, and finally the pedagogical approaches to the development of literacy in these case study classrooms. In the

next chapter the emergent picture of continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices is presented.

*Chapter 8***“The past is a foreign country. We do things differently here.”**

(adapted from L.P.Hartley *The Go-Between*)

Continuities and Discontinuities in Cross-phase Literacy Practices

As explained in Chapter 1 (*Issues and Context*) the study originated in the hypothesis that mismatch between the literacy practices of primary and secondary schools could be a major contributory factor to the “transition gap”, to the reported decline in pupil literacy skills post-transfer. The previous three chapters, offering sustained thick description grounded in the ethnographic data, have illustrated the main features of the literacy practices in each phase (see key research questions 1-2, p.10) and drawn attention to emerging areas of difference and commonality. In this chapter a more explicit comparison of cross-phase literacy practices is constructed (addressing research question 3). As suggested in Chapter 2, the study’s experiential focus, placing pupil learning experiences centre stage and giving equal voice to pupil and teacher perceptions, foregrounds issues concerning the relationship between literacy practices and teaching and learning that are left unregarded by procedural studies.

The strength of a sociocultural ethnographic linguistic study such as this lies in its sensitivity to shades of meaning, its ability to illuminate the different beliefs, literate roles, power relationships and pedagogical approaches which interact to create the literacy practices of each literacy community, thereby making it possible to identify differences between settings. Its epistemological stance, adopting a situated perspective through observation of what actually counts as

reading and writing in particular settings; hermeneutic-interpretative approach, concerned with the meanings within social interactions; and realist postpositivistic orientation, sensitive to informant perceptions while cognisant that the final account is the researcher's representation, serves to bring out the continuum of development between phases. Analysis may reveal no single, definitive answer to the question of continuities and discontinuities in cross-phase literacy practices, but, more importantly, highlights the fact that the continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices are not clear-cut divisions. It is the combination of and extent to which the themes and sub-themes are represented within each phase, rather than the predominance or absence of any one aspect, which creates the differences between the literacy practices of the two phases. To say this is a feature of primary school literacy practices but not of secondary, or vice versa, is rarely possible; the differences therefore represent tendencies or preferences rather than absolutes.

Although it has been suggested that each classroom presents a distinctive literacy community, and one might therefore expect differences in the teaching and learning culture at classroom level, analysis has foregrounded discernible patterns within each phase. Therefore within the context of this study the term "continuity" (as defined in Chapter 2) is used to describe those literacy practices which are sufficiently similar in each phase to offer coherence from the learner's perspective, enabling the continued construction of meaning from the experiences offered and facilitating the continued development of knowledge, understanding and achievement. "Discontinuity", on the other hand, relates to literacy practices which are dissimilar, do not attune to pupil prior experience of school literacy, or are unfamiliar and which may therefore contribute to cognitive confusion, impede meaning making or interfere with continued literacy development.

The discussion opens with identification of the key characteristics of the literacy practices, demonstrating how literacy is situated within the processes of

teaching and learning and different cultural models of each phase (see p.21).

This synthesis is then supported by a more detailed examination of the continuities and discontinuities, within the study's analytical framework of *What is literacy?*, *Whose literacy?* and *How is literacy developed?*.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LITERACY PRACTICES

A picture of the key characteristics of the literacy practices of each phase, their commonalities and differences, and of how pupils are socialised into each literacy community (discussed in Chapters 3 and 5), emerges from synthesis of observation and interview data, of participant views and researcher interpretations. Within this synthesis eight features stand out as characteristic of "literacy at transition", features suggesting a common overarching pattern within which there are differences of emphasis and orientation:

1. Literacy is an issue of central importance in both phases but for different reasons. In both phases literacy learning is more than the acquisition of social skills, it is also (as suggested by Cook-Gumperz, 1986, p.3; Chapter 3 above) "a social process of demonstrating knowledgeability". In Y6 literacy is positioned at the centre of the curriculum as an object of study, a body of skills to be taught and mastered, whereas in Y7 its pre-eminence is grounded in its value as a tool to get something done, a vital instrument for the development of subject specific knowledge. This situation correlates with that identified by Webster, Beveridge and Reed (1996) wherein direct teaching of literacy moves from centre to periphery. However in this study the belief is that literacy still remains a central issue of concern for teachers and pupils alike.

2. In both phases teacher literacy practices are dominant. The asymmetrical power relationships position the teacher as dominant language user and source of authority. In both phases the teacher selects the text, defines the literacy activity, allocates turns and determines what literacy knowledge and practices are relevant. Teacher classroom behaviour presents as a major contributory factor to the development of pupil literacy. However, whereas Galton and Willcocks (1983, p.175; discussed Chapter 2) suggest the style of interactions with pupils is most influential in this respect, this study suggests that the underlying teacher beliefs about literacy and their resultant pedagogical approach are of prime importance, since these features drive and shape the interactions.
3. Teachers in both phases occupy the role of text-mediator (Martin, 1999; discussed Chapters 3 and 6), *standing between pupils and text* and both guiding and delimiting pupil interpretation of and meaning making around the text. The differing nature of the texts (largely narrative in Y6 and factual in Y7) and purposes for reading do not affect this positioning.
4. Literacy presents as a social experience (see Chapter 5), something to share and central to classroom interactions. As these pupils participate in literacy events they acquire situated understandings of what counts as literacy in particular classrooms, developing "both linguistic and sociocultural knowledge for what it means to be a member of their particular literacy community" (Gutierrez, 1994, pp.337-8) and thereby learning to act in socially appropriate ways. In both phases the activity of reading fits Green and Weade's description (1990, p.328) of a socially negotiated performance, not always reflecting the reading competence or ability of pupil participants but rather a social occasion, or procedural display (Green and Bloome, 1996, p.191), wherein participants are aware of the rules (Kress, 1997, p.118).

5. Literacy fulfils an important function as meaning maker (Chapter 5). In both phases reading is a social process wherein teacher and pupils (or groups of pupils) interact to make meaning with and around texts and develop shared understandings and common knowledge.
6. Pedagogical approaches to literacy development differ (Chapter 7). In Y6 the main approach is through direct tuition whereas in Y7 literacy development takes place through subject learning. This finding thus extends to the Y6/7 transition both Meek's notion (1997, p.37) of the shift from learning to read to reading to learn after three years of schooling, and also Gee's reference (1999, p.371) to the divide between emphasis on decoding, word recognition and literal comprehension in the early primary years and the place of reading in the later grades within specific "learning-focused, content based or disciplinary practices".
7. Although the notion of literacy as pleasure giver (Chapter 5) remains constant, its positioning within the literacy practices alters. Reading for pleasure and enjoyment is a daily occurrence within the Y6 classroom practices and also part of home literacy practices. However, although Y7 pupils still view reading as a pleasurable activity (a growing interest for some boy informants), time for such is largely confined to home literacy practices. In the Y7 classrooms the role of literacy as pleasure giver is replaced by that of literacy as source of information.
8. School literacy practices impinge on home literacy practices for pupils in both phases but differently (Chapter 6). The parental/family role of "teacher" or supporter of skill development (listening to the child read or testing spelling) for the Y6 pupils transforms into that of "research assistant" as Y7 pupils grapple with subject content and research assignments.

It is the combination of these characteristics, of the language and literacy socialisation process in all its complexity, which is more powerful than any single factor explanation. Taken together these eight features foreground the main areas of commonality and difference between the cross-phase literacy practices, thereby demonstrating the cultural distance between the two phases despite their temporal proximity. There are clear parallels with the situation described by Heath (1983, p.344) wherein, although the physical distance (geographical proximity) between Trackton and Roadville was minimal, the cultural distance was great. The extent of this cultural division is brought out in the following discussion which provides a synthesis of the continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices emerging from issues explored in Chapters 5-7 and thereby fulfils the aims of extending knowledge of what constitutes literacy and how it is taught in both phases and foregrounding the implications for practice (see Chapter 2 p.18).

FAMILIAR PASSAGEWAYS: Continuities in cross-phase literacy practices

Continuities exist in the underlying beliefs about literacy which determine "what is literacy" within these classrooms. Although the literacy practices in both phases embody elements of both the autonomous and ideological models (see Chapter 3), the over-riding belief appears to be that literacy is a finite set of skills which has to be learned (Y6) or is needed to ensure successful subject learning (Y7). Autonomous beliefs are exemplified by conceptualisation of literacy in technical terms and treatment as independent of social context. There is continuing concern (amongst teachers and pupils) with secretarial aspects of writing (although these receive greater emphasis in Y6). Propositional knowledge of literacy takes precedence over dispositional knowledge, with learners expected to become users of the existing system (through procedural

display and apprenticeship) rather than learning/developing literacy through problem-solving.

In both phases literacy is accorded a functional role as organisational tool. This operates at the levels of institutional literacy (with form noticeboards used to regulate activities); of literacy of the external educational world (Dewey Classification System); of teacher literacy (shared lesson plans); and of pupil literacy (homework diaries). Literacy is also used as a record of learning, with pupils and teachers in both phases believing that the written word provides a means of demonstrating knowledge to the teacher and of fulfilling teacher-imposed educational goals.

Ideologically orientated literacy practices centre around the use of texts to make meaning in the "New Literacy" sense of developing a language for sharing and connecting with others. Interactions around text enable pupils to develop awareness of the value of literacy as meaning maker, to see that the origins of meaning lie outside the text and are negotiated and constructed through social exchange. *Emphasis is placed on starting from where the pupils are in order to create "common knowledge", shared understanding and vocabulary.* Pupils in both phases are given the opportunity to engage in experiences which show them not only how to be literate, but also (through the use of literacy to solve problems, discover, comment and respond) what literacy is good for.

Literacy offers a social experience in which reading is a shared activity, whether in whole class situations (both phases) or in teacher directed pairs or small groups (more characteristic of Y6). Y6 pupils are more likely to read the text individually or in pairs prior to discussion, whereas in Y7 the text is read aloud, *with constant pauses to check understanding or explain.* Literacy is associated with personal response and viewed as a source of pleasure and enjoyment. Even though schooltime opportunities for private reading for pleasure decrease in

Y7, home reading interests are generally sustained (or even increase) and some pupils also continue to write for pleasure.

The major elements of continuity lie within the theme of whose literacy determines the literacy practices. In both phases teacher and pupils occupy traditional roles with teacher literacy dominating and presenting as the standard literacy, and pupils positioned as novice learners. As dominant language user the teachers are cast in the role of "orchestrator" and "legitimator" of the literacy practices. As "moderator" they allocate turns, state the rules delimiting contributions, control interactions and determine what is appropriate or relevant knowledge. The ways in which they accept pupil answers as correct, but then re-phrase or extend, develop a message system which links cultural knowledge, social power and literacy. Their role as examiner, exerting authority through comments on pupils' work, may be largely implicit but is clearly understood by pupils.

Pupils are exposed to print and the actions of reading and writing as functional social activities guided by knowledgeable adults. Teacher as text mediator positions pupils as receivers of teacher-mediated or teacher-defined text knowledge. In addition teacher as literacy definer both defines pupil literacy status (through comments before and after reading, set placement and levels of support) and restricts pupils' literacy opportunities by dictating the form of written response and choice of text. Finally, in both phases, the teacher's own identity as literate adult influences particular emphases within the literacy practices e.g. focus on vocabulary extension or text surveyal.

In both phases pupils are positioned as respondents, contributing short factual responses within the IRF sequence, as answerers of particular types of question; but do occasionally assume the position of questioners, as checkers of procedures. As text users all pupils occupy the roles of code-breaker (decoder

of print) and text participant (respondent to literal level questions). Although opportunities for pupils to use their own voice as literate individuals, drawing on personal experience to comprehend text, are limited, pupils own literacy practices are drawn on during the individual completion of literacy tasks. However, the extent to which individual pupils engage with set tasks differently, despite explicit teacher instruction in how to proceed, is most noticeable in Y7.

Although texts, especially the dictionary, are central to the literacy practices of both phases, treated as objects of authority, the differing emphasis on direct tuition and subject learning gives texts a different voice within these literacy practices.

There are also continuities in how other literacies impinge on the literacy practices of each phase. Registration, letters home, assessment and record keeping and the print environment retain sufficient similarity to remain familiar landscapes of school literacy even if precise details differ. Pupils in both phases have their own (albeit small) literate space but are subject to more powerful influences. Teachers are positioned by the literacy practices not only of their own institution but also by those of the external educational world, the world of the LEA (through the Transition Module), of the DfEE (through NC, NLS and SATs), and of examination boards. School literacy practices continue to percolate into home life through homework, although parental role differs, and pupil references to home literacy practices only describe schooled literacy practices.

Pedagogical approaches to how literacy is developed offer fewer areas of continuity. Teachers in both phases engage in the direct tuition of the extraction of meaning from text, encourage consultation of the dictionary to clarify word meanings and use literacy lexical items such as sentence, paragraph and punctuation. Y6 familiarity with narrative text structure is extended and

capitalised on in Y7 as pupils write historical and real-life recounts. Greatest continuity is offered by literacy through interaction, wherein reading is not a solitary, isolated activity, but rather the whole-class textual discussions serve to develop common knowledge of both subject content and of ways to extract meaning. Teacher questions in both phases focus pupil attention on the "important" aspects and model a method of reading. Instances of metacognitive modelling and teachers presenting literate role models also occur in both phases, although such occurrences appear incidental rather than deliberate, and all the teachers use oral prompts as "external triggers" of written discourse production.

Thus the main areas of continuity, cognisance of which could ease the effects (discussed in Chapter 2) of the transfer process on pupils, comprise the beliefs in literacy as a finite set of skills which can be learned, the dominance of teacher literacy practices and the development of literacy as an interactive social experience. However, as the following section demonstrates, even within these elements there are aspects of discontinuity.

"THE PAST IS A FOREIGN COUNTRY. WE DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY HERE.": Discontinuities in cross-phase literacy practices

While discontinuities in some aspects of the literacy practices are very evident, surface similarities sometimes belie underlying differences, and can actually be a cause of greater cognitive confusion for pupils than practices which are overtly dissimilar.

Despite suggestion that both autonomous and ideological beliefs underlie "what is literacy" in both phases and that both share the notion of literacy as a set of

skills to be learned, nevertheless discontinuities are discernible in the way these beliefs are enacted. In Y7 explicit teaching of literacy skills is relatively rare. Whereas in Y6 reading was an "object of instruction", concerned with the staged acquisition of a hierarchy of target skills, with explicit teaching of strategies to extract information from decontextualised texts, with the use of reading schemes and a traditional phonics approach to the decoding of decontextualised sounds, words and texts; in Y7 reading is a source of content, a matter of employing the skills learned and focusing on the meaning or factual content of texts contextualised within the subject. Explicit teaching of literacy at word, sentence and text level, of knowledge about language, phonics and spelling rules, is replaced by a focus on texts (for content rather than linguistic structure), and spelling tests of subject specific vocabulary.

Discontinuities occur in the use of literacy as organisational tool, with the function of the board switching from organiser (enabling pupils to function as independent learners) to record of subject learning. In Y7 literacy is used as a tool to assess subject knowledge rather than being the focus of the assessment (for skill proficiency), and records subject content rather than the learning of skills. The functional, everyday usage of literacy in Y6 is transformed into reproductive usage within the specialised domains of different subjects, with Y7 pupils positioned in a passive, secretarial model of language use. Another new usage in Y7 is that of literacy as control, as a strategic measure to maintain teacher authority and as a disciplinary punitive instrument (copying in silence).

Despite consistency in the notion of literacy as meaning maker, practices differ somewhat. Problem-solving tasks in Y6 are experiential, with literacy used to support learning and communicate ideas, whereas Y7 problem-solving activities centre around the textual examination of factual information, offering experiences requiring dispositional knowledge of how to construct appropriate texts. The meaning making function of displays (as an interactive, shared experience, integral to the scheme of work) characteristic of Y6 gives way in

Y7 to display of pupil "final" drafts as a record of topics studied. Pupil awareness of the potential of literacy as meaning maker develops from Y6 perception of its use for conveying information to others, to Y7 pupils' appreciation of how different literacy tasks enable the construction of different types of meaning.

Fewer discontinuities emerge in examination of whose literacy determines the literacy practices of each phase. As text mediators the observed teachers orientate pupils to different understandings of the function of text as source of information (Y7) or as site for reading skill practice (Y6) and position pupils as different kinds of readers, as interpreters of content (Y7) or as apprentice decoders (Y6), thereby reinforcing the centrality of the skills-knowledge differential to the discontinuous literacy practices.

Pupil literacy may be subordinated to teacher literacy in both phases, but nevertheless there are aspects of discontinuity. A dichotomy exists in the development in pupil role as questioner, for not only are Y7 pupils more likely to ask ritual questions to check the veracity of their responses (suggesting concern with subject content and insecurity in their self-esteem as competent literate individuals), but also (very occasionally) they are prepared to ask content questions which demonstrate inquisitiveness and thoughtfulness and to challenge the authority of teacher literacy (suggesting greater confidence). In addition Y7 readers are positioned as text users, questioning how a particular text might contribute to their learning, and as information retrievers.

Although the text is positioned as authoritative in both phases, the nature of this authority differs. In the secondary classrooms the text is reified by teachers and pupils as a source of authority, central to the construction of subject knowledge. Pupils copy the text to ensure that the "correct" answer is recorded, whereas Y6 pupils draw on personal experience and use their own

words. In addition, the setting of research homeworks and the status of the exercise book as record of learning encourages Y7 pupils to view the text as a resource, rather than as "tutor" or pleasure giver. Prevailing practices also affect textual voice. Whereas the use of single texts in Y6 and some Y7 subjects encourages perception of text as authoritative, the use of multiple texts in History and Geography, used selectively to construct knowledge, develops perception of text as resource.

The greatest areas of discontinuity occur in the pedagogical approaches to how literacy is developed. The transition from literacy through directed study to literacy through subject learning and the movement of literacy learning from the centre to the periphery has already been discussed. Exposure to and use of a wider range of literacy learning lexical items occurs in the Y6 classrooms as pupils encounter terms related to punctuation, text structure, grammar, language varieties and literacy strategies; whereas, in keeping with the content focus, the more restricted Y7 literacy lexical diet, although including occasional reference to word classes, focuses on vocabulary related to information retrieval.

Y7 pupils develop their literacy skills through subject learning as they learn the subject-specific registers of secondary education (Macken-Horarik, 1996, p.232) and use literacy as a tool to demonstrate subject knowledge. However, although topic work and Maths investigations provide Y6 pupils with a taster of this approach, the preponderance of pupil activity and teacher talk offers a marked contrast to the multiple-text-based orientation of secondary subject learning. Y7 pupils are also required to employ a wider range of reading strategies for informational rather than recreational and performative purposes. Explicit teaching of text structure also differs, with Y6 pupils learning to deconstruct a recount text (as part of the Transition Module) and Y7 pupils

being taught how to construct written reports and discussions. The variety of text-types which pupils are required to produce also widens.

Further discontinuity develops through the move from independent pupil-identified to directed teacher-led contextualisation. Although rare in Y6, in Y7 explicit contextualisation is a predominant initiating feature, with information from personal knowledge and subject learning drawn on to make sense of texts.

Thus the main areas of discontinuity, areas which could contribute to transition difficulties, occur within the pedagogical approaches towards literacy development, centring around the move from the direct tuition of literacy skills to the use of literacy as a tool for subject learning, from paired and group work to teacher-directed whole class interaction around a text. Although texts retain authoritative status, the range of texts widens and the source of textual authority switches from skill developer to information-provider/knowledge-giver. The implications of these continuities and discontinuities, both for pupils' learning and for educational practice, are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 9**Moving On**

“To make an end is to make a beginning”

(T.S.Eliot *Little Gidding*)

Implications for practice and further research

This chapter addresses the final issues, the contribution of the study to professional practice and policy in the conceptual areas of classroom literacy research, extending knowledge of classroom literacy practices at particular stages of education, and of primary-secondary transition; and the methodological implications arising from the research design and analytical approach, especially its relationship to the development of the informants' knowledge and understanding about literacy. Finally, after identification of issues for further research, the account closes with reflection on and evaluation of the entire study.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND
POLICY IN EDUCATION .****A. CLASSROOM LITERACY PRACTICES:**

The original claim that the study would “enhance teacher awareness not only of literacy practices in the other phase but also of pupil literacy practices” and therefore had the potential to “inform teaching and thereby ease transition” (p.9) is upheld by the findings. There are not only pedagogical implications for classroom literacy practice but also practical implications related to the development of teacher knowledge about literacy.

It has been suggested (Chapters 5-8) that transition from primary to secondary classrooms requires a certain level of sociolinguistic competence from pupils

and has potential for cognitive confusion (Au, 1980, p.91; discussed p.4 above) due to the differing literacy practices. Therefore if Y7 pupils are to learn the rules of literate behaviour within their new literacy communities, there is need not only for teacher awareness of the differing groundrules and literacy practices governing and surrounding literacy events in the other phase (thus confirming Littlefair's suggestion (1991, p.63)), but also for supported socialisation into these new literacy communities.

Discussion in *What is literacy?* highlighted the range of understandings about literacy which teachers and pupils may hold and foregrounded the notion of pupil adaptation to "the teacher's theoretical orientation to what written language learning is and how it occurs" (Edelsky, 1996, p.128; discussed p.4 above). Case study teachers have commented on the value of awareness of this notion in making them more sensitive to pupil responses and more reflective about their pedagogical approaches, while pupils appreciate the opportunity to articulate their understanding of the purpose and value of particular literacy tasks. Perhaps the importance of drawing attention to the differing beliefs underpinning the literacy practices of each phase is not so much to highlight the need for both phases to operate with the same literacy model, as to underline the need for a level of teacher awareness and common understanding of the differing models, with explicit explanation of this to pupils. The purpose of such explanation would be to build and extend existing pupil knowledge and beliefs about literacy into a multiliteracy awareness through which pupils are enabled to draw effectively on their skills and understanding to meet the demands of their new school literacy community. This has implications for initial training and professional development programmes. Although the NLS and new KS3 Pilot Framework are attempts to address the issue of teacher knowledge about literacy, and their training programmes might develop a cross-phase understanding of and approach to literacy, it is questionable whether these will encourage the multiliteracy awareness identified as desirable by this study.

It has been argued (Chapter 5) that although teachers in both phases tend to view literacy as a set of skills to be learned, the fact that there is currently discontinuity in the actions and attitudes arising from this belief raises several issues: whether this difference should be made explicit to pupils; whether the NLS Y7 Framework, offering continuity in the direct tuition of literacy skills through English, presents the solution; or whether literacy teaching within the subject context is more effective. Although professional experience would recommend the latter option, the orientation of this study would not offer adequate research evidence to support this claim. The finding that Y6 and Y7 pupils are still trying to “master the mechanics of reading” (Christie, 1998, p.47; discussed p.88 above) and require continued tuition, further reinforces the need to address this issue. The challenge is to find an effective pedagogical approach to this problem.

There are also implications arising from the cross-phase discontinuity in opportunity and encouragement for reading for pleasure, with no observable progression even in English. The change of location from school to home raises the issue of whether this shift is significant, or whether location is immaterial as long as the practice is sustained. Secondary school encouragement of ERIC or Registration Reading, which superficially appears to offer greater continuity with primary practice, is not necessarily the answer (comment based on professional experience), perhaps because it does not create the same ethos of sharing and talking about books.

The identification of teachers as the dominant language users, and of the literacy roles and positions occupied by other “voices” in the classroom (Chapter 6), has implications for practice. Teacher informants value heightened awareness of how their practice restricts pupil literacy opportunities. It is therefore suggested that problems of “regression” might be addressed if secondary teachers were encouraged to adopt pedagogical strategies which demonstrated awareness of, and valued differences in, the pupil’s primary

school, home and personal literacy practices; awareness that pupils may tackle tasks differently and follow different literacy routes to achieve the same end-product. Differences in teacher enactment of the role of text-mediator suggest the importance of raising secondary teacher awareness of the value to pupils of direct interaction with text and continued opportunities for independent reading, empowering them as readers by demonstrating respect for their developing status as literate individuals. There are implications for the support and information the school needs to provide to enable families to make the transition from “teacher” or supporter of skill development to “research assistant”(see Chapter 6). The important issue is not that the nature of such support should be prescribed, but rather that school expectations are made explicit to parents and pupils and appropriate strategies explained.

Further pedagogical implications arise from the final, more practically orientated focus on *How Literacy is Developed*, foregrounding the importance of addressing issues concerning the move from the direct tuition of literacy skills to the incidental learning of literacy through subject tuition. Teacher awareness of the discontinuity is a first step, but in addition there is the need (also identified by Gee, 1999, p.371) to make the differences explicit to pupils and for subject teachers to recognise and accept their responsibility for introducing secondary pupils to the specific literacy requirements of their own subjects (an issue which the LEA KS3 Literacy Project (locally) and Curriculum 2000, supported by QCA exemplar schemes of work (nationally), are now addressing). An issue closely linked to this changing orientation to literacy concerns the centrality of textbooks, as stimulus or source of information, to most Y7 lessons (see Chapter 7, pp.135-6): a novel learning experience for Y6 pupils. Careful selection of pedagogical approach and teaching of appropriate strategies (e.g. DARTs, SRE, EXIT), combined with awareness of pupil existing knowledge and continuity in use of literacy related lexical items, can alleviate the difficulties, but this solution is dependent on the availability of literacy teaching professional development opportunities for subject teachers.

Other potential solutions include making explicit links to prior learning of text-types during the Literacy Hour; or following pupil advice, that secondary subject teachers should explicitly teach how to read the textbooks.

If the writing activities observed in the Y6 classrooms are representative of the range of writing experiences enjoyed by Y6 pupils, this presents a major area of discontinuity and suggests that pupils could be better supported to meet the writing demands of the secondary curriculum if secondary teachers offered text models and, following the example of Miss Somerville, focused on the structure of the texts which they wish Y7 pupils to produce.

The finding that whole-class interactions around text are a socially negotiated performance not necessarily reflecting the literacy competence of the participants (Green and Weade, 1990, p.328), underlines the need for teacher awareness of how pupils play the “game” of reading without engaging with or understanding the text and for knowledge of strategies to encourage more active textual interrogation. Furthermore, it foregrounds the importance of making the groundrules for each literacy activity explicit in the early stages of the Y7 experience. It is also suggested that secondary teachers need to build on pupil groupwork skills for literacy tasks from the start of Y7, since the inclusion of groupwork would not only offer a more continuous educational experience but would also carry the implicit message that skills learned in the primary school are valued.

B. PRIMARY-SECONDARY TRANSITION:

How does an experiential study of classroom literacy practices contribute to knowledge and inform the practice of primary-secondary transition? Apart from the issues of classroom literacy practices discussed above, the study also raises issues related to the approach to and management of this transition.

The study's ethnographic approach has fostered the belief that it is only through firsthand knowledge of how pupils are taught and of Y6 pupil skill levels, that secondary practitioners will be able to provide a smoother transition and more continuous educational experience. Observation and participation in the Y6 classrooms (including the examination of pupil work) not only heightens understanding of teaching and learning processes, familiarity with curricular content and pupil achievement levels, but also aids interpretation of information within transfer records (thereby overcoming the problem identified by Herrington and Doyle, 1997, discussed in Chapter 2). The development of this type of relationship between a secondary school and a feeder school, focusing as it does on experiential aspects of pupils' learning, requires not only co-operation, commitment and goodwill but also careful planning, resourcing, rationale and clear mechanisms for dissemination of the resultant information. Current focus on literacy at KS3 and encouragement for secondary schools to appoint a Literacy Co-ordinator might present the appropriate time for implementation of such a strategy.

In addition pupils and teachers in this study confirm the findings of other recent research (including DfEE, 1999a) which suggests that existence of the National Curriculum is insufficient on its own to ensure continuity and progression. Pupils perceive no sense of the continuous nature of learning, some reporting repetition; no recognition of previous experience and achievements; and no challenging work extending existing skills, knowledge and understanding; while secondary teachers admit to a "fresh start" approach and to unfamiliarity with the primary school programmes of study in their subject. However, teacher informants now recognise the need to build directly on primary practice, especially to capitalise on pupil groupwork skills and offer new, challenging and stimulating activities rather than simply re-visiting prior learning. Such a response not only requires a change in teacher attitudes, but further reinforces the need for detailed knowledge of cross-phase practices and for the re-working of the content and pedagogical approach within Y7 schemes of work.

The third major issue foregrounded by analysis of transition practices concerns the notion of “planned discontinuity” (Tickle, 1985; discussed in Chapter 2).

Adoption of such an approach would require clear identification of appropriate discontinuous elements (e.g. the transition from learning to read to reading to learn, the use and place of textbooks or specific teaching styles); explicit explanation of these to pupils, framing the change as a positive move within their development as learners; and the establishment of new groundrules.

Successful implementation of such a policy further emphasises the need for detailed teacher knowledge of the cross-phase practices and agreement about the primary teacher’s role in preparing pupils for the changes.

CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

The study makes a contribution to three fields. Firstly, to classroom literacy research, it offers a sociocultural analysis of literacy practices at primary-secondary transition and provides the type of interpretative study of content area classrooms identified as needful by Moje (1996). The “literacy” literature review (Chapter 3) supports data analysis and interpretation by offering a synthesis of the literature and research studies into literacy relevant to Y6/7 school literacy practices, thus providing a resource for teachers and other researchers entering this field.

In the field of primary-secondary transition its experiential focus on literacy practices offers a new dimension, foregrounding a different approach to issues of “regression” and “falling standards” than that of procedural studies and government reports, and providing a detailed examination of this one issue (literacy) rather than a generalised survey. Thereby it also fulfils research needs identified by DfEE for studies which inform teaching practice by examination of “teaching strategies at the Key Stage 2/3 interface” (1999a, p.29; see p.9

above), and by Youngman (1986) for a study which describes, interprets, challenges and develops the evidence of transfer (see p.25). Unlike existing studies concerned with primary-secondary transition it places pupils at the centre of the discussion in its attempt to identify possible causes for difficulties encountered by pupils striving to adjust to their new learning community.

Thirdly the study's epistemological stance further develops understanding of the relationship between methodology, methods and research findings. Its ethnographic approach, entailing a multi-strategy design, differs from previous studies, such as Galton and Willcocks (1983), Herrington and Doyle (1997) and Hargreaves and Galton (in press) (discussed Chapter 2), in that it did not rely on questionnaire or pre-set interview or observation schedules and thus was more responsive to unexpected outcomes. Although the study revealed interesting differences between teachers, subjects and lessons, and fascinating insights into pupil perceptions of school literacy tasks, this report retains focus on the original objectives. In addition the study has developed a new analytic framework which incorporates notions from a range of perspectives on literacy and offers a wider overview of classroom literacy practices than is found in more traditional studies of pedagogical practice.

Encouraging the teacher informants to make sense of their everyday school literacy practices has led to re-appraisal of their pedagogical approaches, thus reinforcing the notion that classroom-based research provides effective professional development, that "empowering research", "on, for and with" participants (Cameron et al., 1992, p.22; see Chapter 4) not only aids researcher interpretation and grounds the research more effectively in actual practice, but also enhances informant knowledge and understanding of literacy (thereby also supporting the views of Wells and Chang-Wells, 1992, p.10 and Barton, 2000, p.175).

ISSUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Research is a dynamic and creative process, with journey's end ever more elusive. The quest for answers to the original research questions raised further issues, some related to the level of detail within the existing study and others suggesting new research projects. However, prime need is for studies replicating the original to establish its generalisability to other settings, and further experiential studies into primary-secondary transition.

A. EXTENDING "LITERACY AT TRANSITION":

Inevitably issues emerged during data collection and analysis which could not be satisfied within the time constraints, setting or sample. These include:

- whether the identified continuities and discontinuities are equally apposite to other curriculum subjects, or to pupils of different ability or ethnic origin;
- whether observation of primary History or Geography would sustain the findings;
- whether pupils cope with discontinuity in teaching and learning styles if there is continuity in context, or, conversely, whether continuity in literacy practices enables pupils to access unfamiliar content;
- whether the fostering of attitudes/expectations as language makers (Kress, 1997) would enable pupils to cope more effectively with subject uses of language post-transfer;
- whether pupil definitions of reading alter after transition and, if so, what factors are influential in causing this difference;
- whether cross-phase differences in the use of closed, pseudo and test questions have implications for literacy development;
- whether the secondary situation wherein whole-class teacher-pupil interaction generally relates to reading and individual pupil-teacher interaction to the written task also obtains in the primary school.

B. RELATED STUDIES:

Sometimes ideas from the literature and themes appearing in the data combined to highlight topics for further research. Firstly, pupil responses during the initial study suggested gender might be an influential factor with respect to the effects of primary-secondary transition on literacy development. However, this finding was not upheld by the responses of pupils in the main study. Further research is therefore needed to establish whether there is a gender difference in how pupils cope with the transition and what effect transition has on their literacy practices.

Secondly, Stables (1995) suggests that one main cause of discontinuity within pupils' experience of Technology in Y6 and Y7 arises from the increased level of teacher control and consequent reduction in opportunities for Y7 pupils to explore projects independently. A similar feature occurred in this study, with the emphasis on rules for subject study in initial Y7 lessons and failure to include groupwork opportunities until late February. Research into the differences in levels of teacher control in different subjects/phases and the effect of this on pupil independence and willingness to take responsibility as learners could be informative for both pedagogical practice and primary-secondary transition.

Thirdly, given that the notion of intertextuality (Macken-Horarik, 1998, p.76; discussed Chapters 3 and 5) aided interpretation of pupil use of teacherly discourse when organising groupwork, further discontinuities in cross-phase literacy practices might be identified through closer analysis of the intertextual voices featuring during interaction around texts and in pupil written scripts.

Other issues emerging as potentially valuable research projects include the relationship between disaffection and maturation; the relative effectiveness of explicit teacher-led as opposed to implicit pupil-led contextualisation; "rites of passage" within the secondary school; the changing nature and focus of peer interaction during paired and groupwork; and finally, further examination of

pupil literacy practices, of the differing ways pupils approach a common task, in order to aid understanding of the respective influence of home and school literacy practices and how pupils are able to take from these.

REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

Journey's end is in sight, time to reflect on all that has gone before and is yet to come. Critical reflection on *Literacy at Transition* suggests one of its main strengths arises from its wide theoretical underpinning: drawing on literature from the fields of language and literacy study including sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics and classroom literacy research; of primary-secondary transition; and of research methodology, especially ethnography and qualitative research. Other strengths (discussed in Chapter 4) result from the research design: its longitudinal nature, use of observation and open-ended fieldnotes, triangulation of a range of perspectives, sharing of the research agenda with informants, development of a new analytic framework, experiential perspective and interweaving of data interpretation and insights from the literature.

The study's major weakness lies in the imbalance in data from the two phases: more extensive Y6 fieldwork (restricted by professional commitments) would have strengthened the study. Other features, which would ideally have been approached differently, include issues entailing pragmatic rather than "reasoned" decisions (such as choice of sites, sample representativeness and observation timings); and issues related to fieldwork conduct (recording strategies, time lapse between observations/interviews and write-up). Opportunities which might have been explored more effectively include obtaining more detailed groupwork data, seeking parental views and asking more direct questions.

A few overriding issues, the extent of whose influence it is impossible to determine, affect the context in which the study was conducted. First of these is

its historical context. Although designed to be professionally and locally relevant, KS2-3 transition is now a key issue on the national educational agenda (KS3 Pilot Framework) and the subject of many publications. This situation can be interpreted in two ways: viewed negatively the study has been overtaken by events, viewed more positively the findings are particularly timely, especially as its precise literacy focus has not been replicated. Also the Main Study Y6 fieldwork was completed in the term prior to introduction of NLS and in which the LEA Transition Module was new, and therefore needs replication (albeit on a smaller scale) to establish the continuing validity and generalisability of the findings. However, the emergence of clear aspects of continuity and discontinuity between phases, confirming professional experience and found informative by teacher informants, suggests wider relevance. Finally, the greatest dilemma concerned conflict between research needs and professional role (see Chapter 4 and Appendix C), not merely issues of accountability or ethics, issues resolvable given “responsible” research; but also of reactivity and determination of whether recommendations were adequately grounded in the data or were the product of everyday professional experience.

Endview:

In one sense the study is complete in itself, offering a description of the particular literacy practices of particular pupils, teachers, subjects and schools at a particular point in time and thus adding to the collection of studies of classroom literacy practices. It demonstrates the value of researching a familiar culture, approaching with certain hypotheses and using differing literacy theories to test these out, thereby substantiating professional “instincts” such as the belief that Y6 pupils are more “literate” than secondary teachers credit or that secondary teaching style deskills pupils. Furthermore such an approach also produces new insights: that teacher dominance as language user reduces pupils’ opportunities for using their own literacy practices; that teacher as text-mediator stands between pupil and text, restricting pupil opportunities for

meaning making; or that Y7 teacher focus on control reduces pupil independence as learners.

In terms of theory the study resulted in the design of a new analytic framework incorporating *What is literacy?* (participant beliefs), *Whose literacy?* (contributory literacy voices) and *How literacy is developed* (pedagogical approaches); foregrounded the subject positions occupied by the different classroom voices and the power implications of these positions; and highlighted the relationship between teacher understanding and beliefs about literacy and the pedagogical approaches adopted, thus offering a stronger conceptualisation of the relationship between the micro-level contexts of classroom literacy practices and the macro-level contexts of power, social practices and identity.

In terms of practice the study identifies the need for enhanced teacher understanding and practical, firsthand experience of the literacy practices of the opposite phase through cross-phase partnerships, for a more continuous and challenging programme of study building on pupils' existing literacy skills rather than the automatic "fresh start" and for consideration of elements appropriate to explicit "planned discontinuity".

"To make an end is to make a beginning"; research always seems like unfinished business. Working with the collected data much more can be said about the literacy practices of these school communities than is possible to report here. Interesting avenues worthy of future exploration include pupil perceptions of the rationale for and contribution of the set literacy tasks to their own learning and development as literate individuals; the variety of different practices drawn on by pupils completing the same task; and literacy practices in particular subjects and pupil response to these.

It is important to clarify the generalisability possible from a local ethnography of this nature. No claim is made that identical practices would be found in other

school communities, rather what the study offers is a set of questions and theoretical concepts to inform analysis of other settings, to act as a framework to facilitate the discernment of common patterns within the literacy practices surrounding transition.

The findings have already been disseminated informally through discussion with LEA officers, during consultancy work with case study schools and incidentally during delivery of literacy INSET for secondary subject teachers. There is constant seeking of opportunity for more formal dissemination and for informing LEA action concerning its EDP Priority 2: *improving practice with respect to KS2/3 transition.*

Finally it is hoped that this study will prompt other researchers to complement and extend the approach and that the ensuing knowledge and understanding will be used to improve practices surrounding primary-secondary transition so that pupils' educational experience becomes a more continuous and meaningful entity and there is greater recognition of the multiple literacies operating within the educational arena.

Appendix A : Where? When? Who? How? What?
The evidence database

Stage & Date	Site <i>School context</i>	Researcher role	Teacher informants	Pupil informants	Data collection methods	Database <i>Observations</i>	Database <i>Interviews</i>	Database <i>Secondary data</i>
Pilot Y6 Summer 1996	Inner city multi-ethnic primary (J/I). Main feeder to Initial Study secondary school. 300 pupils. 1-2 form entry. 3 Y5/6 classes taught as 4 sets for English.	SENCO at main secondary, with responsibility for collecting pupil data.	Mr Player		Non-participant observation Research journal	2 English lessons (Set 1) 1 English lesson (mixed ability) 1 Topic lesson (mixed ability)	<i>Teacher</i> : Informal discussions after each observation.	Sample worksheets
Initial Study Y7 Spring 1998	11-16 inner city, multi-ethnic comprehensive. 575 pupils. 4 form entry. c.85% RA 2 or more years below CA on entry. Geography groups mixed ability; History taught in half year bands.	Co-ordinator of Learning development. Collaborative teacher	Mr Suleman History Mr Severn Geography 7X1 Mr Snowdon Geography 7X2, 7Y2	Craig Hayley Lyndsey	Non-participant & participant observation Interview Research journal	History : 3 lessons Geography: 7X1- 4 lessons 7X2- 4 lessons 7Y2- 2 lessons	<i>Pupils</i> : 3 semi-structured interviews [January] 3 Focused interviews [March] <i>Teachers</i> : 2 focused interviews	Schemes of work. Pupil work samples. Geography task sheets. Worksheets Initial screening data; SATs levels.

Stage & Date	Site <i>School context</i>	Researcher role	Teacher informants	Pupil informants	Data collection methods	Database <i>Observations</i>	Database <i>Interviews</i>	Database <i>Secondary data</i>
Main Study Y6	Inner city multi-ethnic primary (J/I).	LEA KS3 Literacy Co-ordinator, linked to Main Study secondary.	Mrs Paige	Ann Marie Poonam Edward Kieran Ian Estelle Aimee Cheryl	Non-participant observation	Language : 3 lessons	<i>Pupils :</i> 2 Focused group interviews - a) boys b) girls [June]	Topic scheme of work
Summer 1998	Main feeder to Main Study secondary school. 600 pupils. 3 form entry. Taught in mixed ability form groups.				Interview Research Journal	Library : 2 lessons Topic (Transition Module) : 3 lessons Maths : 3 lessons	Individual conversations re reading habits. <i>Teacher :</i> Focused interview [June]	Lesson plans Pupil work samples Worksheets
Summer 1999						Literacy Hour	Informal discussions after each observation	

Stage & Date	Site <i>School context</i>	Researcher role	Teacher informants	Pupil informants	Data collection methods	Database <i>Observations</i>	Database <i>Interviews</i>	Database <i>Secondary data</i>
Main Study Y7 Autumn 1999 Spring 2000	11-18 multi-ethnic inner city comprehensive. 600 pupils. 4 form entry. c.90% RA 2 or more years below CA on entry. Geography, History, RE taught in mixed ability form groups; English taught in sets after first half term. Intensive Programme School within LEA KS3 Literacy Project (NLP Pilot)	LEA KS3 Literacy Consultant	Miss Somerville Geography Miss Seymour History Mrs Shepherd RE (7C) Mr Samson RE (7H) Miss Spark English (Set 2) Mr Spooner English (Set 4)	Ann Marie Poonam Edward Ian Katie Estelle Aimee Sharooki Simon Nathan Jordan	Non-participant & participant observation Interview Research journal	English : Set 2 4 lessons English : Set 4 4 lessons Geography : 7T 10 lessons History : 7C 7 lessons 7T 6 lessons RE : 7C 9 lessons 7H 5 lessons	<i>Pupils :</i> a) 3 Semi-structured group interviews [October] b) 6 Focused interviews [Feb / March] Literacy Log : a) Group discussion b) 4 Focused interviews [November] <i>Teachers :</i> 4 Semi-structured interviews [April / May] Informal discussions after each observation	Schemes of work Lesson resources (worksheets / textbooks) Pupil work samples Literacy Logs Initial screening data; SATs levels. Dept/school literacy documentation e.g. policy, audit, action plan, scheme.

An exploration of the continuities and discontinuities in literacy practices across secondary transfer and their implications for literacy development.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- * *What literacy practices are characteristic of Y6?*
- * *What are the literacy practices encountered in Y7?*
- * *What are the continuities and discontinuities across phases?*

KEY TEXTS

Heath 1983

Barton & Hamilton 1998

THEMES (and key texts)

What is Literacy?

Lankshear 1997
Street 1984, 1995, 1997
Willinsky 1990

Whose Literacy?

Heath 1983
Fairclough 1989, 1992, 1995
Gee 1990
Luke 1988, 1993
Barton and Ivanic 1991
Ivanic 1998

How is Literacy developed?

Edwards & Mercer 1987
Mercer 1995
Wells & Chang-Wells 1992
Martin, Christie & Rothery 1994
Fisher 1994
Wray & Lewis 1997

SUB-THEMES

Literacy as :

- * a set of skills to be learned
- * organisational tool
- * record of learning
- * control
- * meaning maker
- * social experience
- * pleasure giver
- * identity

Teacher as:

- * dominant language user
- * authority
- * text mediator
- * literacy definer
- * literate adult

Pupil as:

- * novice learner
- * user of institutional discourse
- * text user
- * literate individual

Text as:

- * authoritative
- * resource

Other Literacies:

- * school
- * educational world
- * relationship between home & school literacy

Literacy through :

- * directed study
- * subject learning
- * text-type
- * interaction
- * modelling
- * contextualisation

Appendix C: Researcher Biography

It is important for the reader to understand potential bias in the report which could result from my personal interests and professional experiences. The following factors undoubtedly colour my focus and interpretations.

My teaching career has been spent working with pupils with learning difficulties in mainstream inner city secondary schools. I have been involved in developments within special needs education from the days of “remedial” classes, through Warnock, to the Code of Practice and inclusion.

‘My major interest has been to develop student literacy skills and enjoyment of reading. Thus in each school the key area of concern has been the development of literacy skills and pupil self-confidence as learners. I have been responsible for teaching sets, setting up withdrawal systems for individual support and working collaboratively with subject colleagues to develop responsibility for literacy development within subject teaching.

I have also had responsibility for primary transfer and have had opportunities to work alongside primary colleagues, so have developed an awareness of their shared concerns about literacy levels and their perceptions of the literacy skills pupils will need after transfer.

When I commenced this research I was Co-ordinator of Learning Development in the Initial Study comprehensive school - a school situated in an area of social and economic deprivation. Here I had management and consultancy responsibilities with respect to the role of SENCO, the inclusion of MLD students, collaborative teaching, professional development of all staff for SEN and literacy issues and the development of a core skills programme. I worked collaboratively with staff in both the History and Geography departments for two and a half years and was mentor to Mr Snowdon.

Subsequently I gained employment as KS3 Literacy Consultant for the LEA, which had obtained funding from DfEE as part of the National Literacy Project KS3 Pilot. This necessitated change of sites for the main study and altered my professional status in relation to the teachers I was observing, for instead of being a teaching colleague I was now an 'outsider', responsible for their professional development on issues related to the teaching of literacy. The fact that the secondary school is not only involved in the KS3 Literacy Project, but is also one of the schools for which I am consultant, was both beneficial and a potential issue for reactivity (as discussed in Chapter 4).

I have always been an avid reader, and, as a teacher, anxious that students should come to know and share the pleasures of reading and feel confident in their personal uses of literacy. My real interest in and knowledge about literacy have developed through OU study. As Coffey (1999) suggests, engaging in research affects the researcher's sense of self and identity, so conducting action research projects and, finally, this ethnographic case study has changed my own sense of self and awareness of the literacy practices of the different literate communities in which I participate. Comparison of the different drafts of this work demonstrates this personal growth, as does my changing professional orientation.

Appendix D: Diverse Pupil Practices

This appendix provides evidence of both substantive data and the analytic process:

- a) The fieldnote extracts illustrate how students approach the same literacy task differently, drawing on their own Members' Resources and understanding of literacy practices rather than using the prescribed teacher method.
- b) The format demonstrates how the data was recorded, with the "analysis" section illustrating how the substantive data was interpreted.

Example 1: Reading & extracting information

Fieldnotes: 7.2 English Observation 3, pp.3-4

Lesson focus: *George's Marvellous Medicine* by Roald Dahl.

Task: Write out the recipe for the medicine George made for his grandmother.

Commentary:

- Whole chapter had been read together in previous lesson.
- Teacher had made explicit to pupils that the requisite items were printed in capital letters.
- Variety of strategies used - deduced through observation of eye and finger movement, written output and pupil response to questions.

Pupil responses :

BOY 1: Appears to read whole text closely rather than skim or jump from one area of capital letters to the next. Keeps place in text by finger-pointing, moving steadily from word to word until reaches next item.

BOY 2: Writes list in list format using capital letters. Direct copy of text. Stated that he had used capitals because that was how they were in the book.

BOY 3: First part of list written totally in capitals, second part in lower case.

GIRL 1: Does not copy text verbatim (as do other pupils), rather lists the nature of the ingredient without giving its (brand) name: e.g. "white powder for cleaning teeth". Writes as continuous text.

GIRL 2: Writes list of items, then, after hearing teacher remind another pupil about the description for her own medicine, goes back and adds the descriptors which also appear in capital letters in the text.

GIRL 3: Skims down text with finger and stops at each set of capital letters. Copies the items in list form. Only writes names of products.

GIRL 4: Appears to be reading through the whole text. Adds to the ingredients words which are not in capitals but which indicate the amount e.g. "a box of CARAWAY SEED". Writes in lower case, in list format.

Analysis :

Descriptions demonstrate the differing reading strategies which pupils are able to employ (skimming, scanning, reading closely, distinguishing between upper and lower case letters, using a finger to keep place in the text), and the different levels of success in extracting the appropriate information. They do not all share Miss Spark's understanding of what a recipe looks like or the degree of detail needed. Choice of list or prose format reflects individual text familiarity, while the ability to convert the text descriptor and name into its essential components (Girl 1) suggests a deeper level of interaction with the text than was perhaps anticipated. Girl 4's inclusion of quantities demonstrates a different knowledge of recipes, possibly closer to the teacher's expected outcome.

Example 2: Extended writing - producing a leaflet

Fieldnotes: 7C RE Observation 8, pp.6-7

Lesson focus: Life in Palestine at the time of Jesus

Task: Design a leaflet giving information about Palestine.

Commentary:

- Teacher expectation that pupils would use information from the video watched in class, from the textbook and from independent research.
- No guidance as to style, structure or presentation.
- No pupil able to explain intended audience or purpose for the task.
- Variety of different styles of presentation and writing, differing sources of information and amounts of research. Notes based on analysis of scripts and pupil comments.

Pupil responses :

BOY 1: Sheet of plain A4 paper folded in half. Cover - stylish drawing of flat roofed building with carefully lettered title over. Inside - poor quality handwriting, rushed scrawl with little attention to content. Separate topic on each 'page' - Palestine, Jerusalem, general details. Revealed no depth of knowledge. Admitted only spent 10-15 minutes on it. During lesson folded it up like a fan. (This very different from the pride and care displayed in much of History work.)

BOY 2: Sheet of A3 cartridge paper folded in half. Cover - carefully lettered title and small outlines of many buildings. Inside - 1 1/2 pages of information; neat writing, accurate facts (drawn from classwork, especially video). This followed by large drawing of cartoon character resembling a Roman soldier. Back page carried warning about watching out for this character if you visited this country.

BOY 3: A4 sheet folded. Individualistic writing style - not a series of factual bitesize snippets of information but had thought about content and used the style of a travel brochure involving the reader in a dialogue, mentioning the "wonderful things" you could do and see and making reference / giving details of school, housing and religion. Information from memory - no further research or support at home. Had chosen this writing style independently. Spelling and handwriting poor.

GIRL 1: Colourful booklet. Lines of different coloured wax crayon across cover and on page borders. A4 page folded. Inside c.1/2 page per topic. No illustrations. Information obtained from watching video in class and from library book. Topics covered - markets, jobs, people, homes and weather.

GIRL 2: 3 sides of paper from a notepad, still joined at top. Cover - drawing of a candelabra (in pencil, shaded). Inside careful written description with small pencil drawing below. Topics - homes, lights and Sabbath. Information from worksheets and video, but also by using "Encyclopaedia" at home. Dissatisfied with her results - stated that the work was "no good".

GIRL 3: A4 sheet folded. Colourful picture on cover. Inside - 8 small sections, information and drawings. Packed with facts. Rear page - central title "quick facts", information given in the "Did you know....?" mode.

Analysis :

Mrs Shepherd is perhaps less prescriptive in her instructions about the presentation of the *Palestine leaflet* - maybe because she assumed that pupils shared her concept of the linguistic structure and purpose of a leaflet. She intended that all pupils should supplement classroom learning by conducting research, but few actually consulted texts. Freedom of linguistic choice appeared to empower these pupils as literate individuals (Christie,1988, p.30) -

all were able to complete the task, at their own level and in their own way, mostly as authors, using the text as a form of self-expression.

Example 3: Generating ideas - working in pairs

Fieldnotes : 7T History Observation 4, pp.2-3

Lesson focus: The Roman Empire : Slavery

Task: "Slavery - good or bad?" - paired brainstorm.

Commentary:

- Pupils had already had lessons on this topic and had been expected to carry out research for homework.
- Expected to use exercise books and two textbooks for ideas and information.
- Teacher idea of brainstorm - title in centre of page with words around.
- Pupil notion of partnership varied. Each pupil within pair used literacy differently. Notes based on analysis of written outcome and paired interaction during activity.

Pupil responses :

PAIR 1 (boys): Notion of partnership - "ideas" man and scribe. One boy contributed all the ideas, the other recorded them. No real dialogue. Brainstorm format with good/bad in brackets after each item. Some items two or three words, others sentences starting with 'you' but with no punctuation. Ideas totally from memory - no reference to textbook or exercise book.

PAIR 2 (girls): Dialogue between two equal partners. Some discussion before each point recorded. One girl acted as scribe. Used exercise book as source of ideas before teacher explicitly suggested this as a strategy. No use made of textbook. One girl including reference to feelings when made points e.g.

"jealous if one of them got dressed better" but scribe did not record these comments. Written as two lists under headings good/bad. Ideas written as sentences, but usually omitting capital letter at start.

Analysis:

Even in a five minute brainstorm pupil literacy roles differ - scribe, note-maker, sentence writer, ideas generator, empathetic respondent, text consultant. The task set was the same for all but the implicit tasks differed for pupils (Bloome and Theoderou, 1988, p.222, cited in Floriani, 1994, p.250). The teacher expressed surprise at the range of skills employed by different students, having anticipated that all pupils would generate ideas and note these as a brainstorm around the central idea.

Example 4: Plot summary and character notes - group reading

Fieldnotes: Y6 Main Observation 6 pp.5-6

Lesson focus: "Martin's Mice" by Dick King-Smith.

Lesson objective: To appreciate style and humour in Dick King-Smith's writing, mainly chapters 4 & 5.

Task: Write a summary of chapter 5 and notes on the characters of Dulcie Maude, using class notes.

Commentary:

- Literacy Hour.
- Lesson opened with recap of story so far, then teacher read chapter 5 aloud, interrupting reading to discuss unfamiliar vocabulary, style and humour.
- Discussion of creation of humour through use of clichés, similes and metaphors.

- Class attention drawn to summary ‘notes’ made during previous lessons. These written on large sheets of paper and displayed around room.
- Although written task occupied ‘group work’ section of Hour pupils were expected to work individually. (In fact there was a marked difference between Group Reading pre-NLS when pupils had been self-directing and their approach had been totally collaborative and supportive and the new expectation for independent, silent completion of task.)

Pupil response:

GIRL 1: Very detailed account of story. Events written in sequence.

Paragraphed. Converted teacher character notes into sentences, written as a single paragraph. Included some relevant quotes, copied directly from book, but not explicitly linked to ideas in description.

GIRL 2: Sections of text copied. Occasional inclusion of own sentence. Long and rambling. Copied teacher character notes verbatim. No inclusion of supporting detail.

BOY 1: Brief summary. Key points identified and expressed concisely in short, correctly sequenced sentences; each point on new line. Brief character description, using key words from notes but giving original viewpoint. Note-like rather than connected prose.

BOY 2: Brief. Mixture of key events and supporting details. Own words. Not always sentences. Used some of teacher notes / key words, but also included own ideas and included relevant quotes. Mixture of sentences, copied sections and notes.

Analysis:

Y6 pupils also used differing literacy practices in response to teacher-directed tasks, although a clear instance of this was only witnessed after the introduction

of the Literacy Hour. Descriptions illustrate the range of responses produced when ‘summarising’ the plot of *Martin’s Mice* and writing about the characterisation of Dulcie Maude. Whereas the teacher expected pupils to identify key points and write briefly, most pupils produced a detailed recount of the story. Instead of expanding teacher notes into a character study with quotes, many pupils produced verbatim copies, with only a few adding their own ideas and incorporating relevant quotes, thereby demonstrating a range of understandings about the appropriate text form.

Appendix E : Interactions Around Text

Extracts from lesson observations

This appendix contains an extract from the transcript of one lesson at each phase of the study. Its purpose is two-fold:

1. Substantive:

To present longer extracts which:

- a) illustrate the differing literacy teaching and learning styles;
- b) reveal the nature of interactions around text;
- c) contextualise shorter extracts used to illustrate points within the discussion of findings;

thereby enabling the reader to make his/her own judgements concerning the literacy practices of each phase.

2. Methodological:

To illustrate how the two-column format of transcript and commentary supported the emergence of themes and sub-themes during the analytic process of content analysis.

Transcript: Dialogue within the transcripts is faithful to the words spoken but hesitations have been omitted and punctuation reflects researcher interpretation based on speaker pauses.

T = teacher P = pupil (where the pupil name is not known)

Commentary: The use of colours within the commentary demonstrates the different types of analysis.

Blue = general comments; researcher interpretation of the observed practices.

Green = sub-theme.

Red = language and literacy skills used within the activities.

Cyan (pale blue) = aspect of continuity or discontinuity.

Appendix E: Interactions Around Text

Extracts from Lesson Observations

Extract 1: Y6 Pilot - Observation 1

Observation

2. *Introduction to Task 1*

"Where would you see a badge?"
 "Or a logo?"
 "On clothes."
 "Can you see a make of clothes that's got a design
 you think - that's that make?"
 "Look around - what can you see?"

Discussion / answer session taking pupils through range of
 examples - clothes, football club, trainers, cars.

Pupils put up hands to answer - not reminded to do so.
 Attempt to call out. Many pupils have hands up for
 time without being called on & keep hands up while
 teacher asking supplementary questions.

"Who brought in symbols? Think History - when
 symbols first used?"

Suggestions re numbers, writing, Egyptians.
 "What about in battles - they needed to recognise
 other."

"Soldiers in armour."

"Pictures on shield, sir."

"Yes, they used symbols on coats of armour &
 shields, like badges."

Discussion / answer session again covering range of ideas.

"We're going to start today something that you are
 going to have to think terribly hard on."

Comments re previous section - still thinking
 of logos & battle symbols. Not paying attention /
 trying to move on to new task.

Teacher moves around the room giving out worksheet. Gives
 instructions as he does so:

"Put your name on straight away - at the top."
 "Look carefully at the instructions - you're going to have
 to follow instructions." "Read what it says at the top."

Commentary

Setting Scene -- Interest Rousing

Whole class teaching.

Teacher leading discussion --
 introducing topic & trying to arouse
 interest through activating prior
 knowledge. Implicit message - liter-
 acy = more than words.

LITERACY THROUGH CONTEXTUALISATION

Probing questions - starts with one
 word answer & encourages
 respondent to elaborate / explain.
 Offers many extra cues to support,
 draw out ideas.

ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS - listening / explaining / defining

Narrowing Focus

ORAL SKILLS -

listening / speaking / drawing on
 existing knowledge

Uses clue after clue to provoke ideas
 & encourage pupils to think.
 Pupils still tending to short answers,
 but interest growing.

Introducing Text

Use of 'we'.

DEFINING LITERACY STATUS

Maintaining focus on task.
 Clear instructions -- setting up
 knowledge of what to be expected in
 task.

Observation

1: DART - MODELLING - Reading for Information

"We're going to read the information. We need to v very very carefully to be able to do the work."
for volunteer to read first paragraph, many hands go selects ALICIA (- prefect, AC, seated near teacher). reads whole of first paragraph aloud. Pauses appropriately using punctuation. Text read accurately, tly & competently with no prompting.

n asks literal comprehension questions based on the graph:

"Why did a knight wear a coat of arms?"
"What were the designs put on first?"
"What is a tunic? Any ideas? We need to understand the words to know what we're doing."
vers accurate. Most of class hands up to volunteer.

"That had some quite difficult words but we need -one that really gets their tongue round words for the bit."

uses DANIEL (AC boy on table near teacher) reads text aloud more slowly but again making good of punctuation & with clear diction. Is helped to read er' & 'sinister'.

ps reading after 'sinister base' & questions class. asks pupils if they found that text difficult & most hands. Then asks Daniel to re-read the 2nd para- a but stops him after each sentence to ask literal ques- e.g.

"How many areas are there?"
"How many rows are there?"
"What were the names on the top row?"
"What were the names of the middle row?"
"What were the names of the bottom row?"
these answered accurately.

Commentary

Whole Class Instruction: Oral Reading / Discussion of Text

Focusing on text.

LITERACY THROUGH DIRECTED STUDY

Teacher dominant language user - orchestrates text reading [continuity]. Class appear used to reading aloud.

PARAGRAPH 1:

ONE PUPIL READS TEXT

ALLOUD. Other pupils listen / follow.

ORAL - literal comprehension TEXT as source of information.

Focusing on facts & vocabulary.

PARAGRAPH 2:

ONE PUPIL READS TEXT

ALLOUD. Other pupils follow.

Teacher literacy definer - pupil literacy status.

Positions pupil as able reader.

Awareness of text difficulty.

Reinforcing strategy of re-reading to increase understanding. Making pupils feel it acceptable not to understand at first reading.

ORAL - LITERAL COMPREHENSION

Focus on facts.

Observation

“We know the names now, but we still don’t know which side some of these go on.”

asks Daniel to read the next three lines which explain ‘exter’, ‘sinister’ & their relation to the knight.

pupils asked to look at the shield on the worksheet & point to what looks like the left from their point of view. When T points out that for the knight it would be the other side & holds the paper up to demonstrate why.

attention brought back to text. Matthew selected to read. Less confident reader but persists. Supported with reading unfamiliar vocabulary :

horizontal, vertical, chevron, combined, complicated. Matthew experiences difficulty with pronunciation of ‘consequently’.

This time teacher summarises content & questioning focuses on key vocabulary : horizontal, vertical, chevron.

pupils able to explain first two, but not last.

As pupils explain T draws lines on blackboard to demonstrate.

Commentary

Involving all pupils.

Active demonstration. Translating text into meaningful experience.

PARAGRAPH 2:

ONE PUPIL READ TEXT ALOUD with TEACHER SUPPORT

Teacher literacy definer - pupil literacy status as less able reader.

Vocabulary - definitions.

Change of strategy - active / practical demonstration bringing text to life.

tract 2 : Y6 Main - Observation 3

Observation

nal Monday morning routine. Class enter to find
ng lists on whiteboard. Expected to start copying
while register taken. Then whole class session ex-
ing the words.

Language lesson - Part 1 : Spelling

edure - teacher points at word and asks pupil to read
ud. Phonic cues given if needed. Praise for correct
ng or phonically sensible attempt with mispronuncia-
corrected. For list 3 pupils then asked to give a defi-
n of the word. If no-one knows or answers not close
e meaning pupils encouraged to use dictionary. Some
s doing this automatically and reading definition
1.

her points at word 'considerate'.

: "Respect."

e: "Nosey."

en: "To think of others."

her points to word 'complete'.

"There's an easy one, have a try Ian. Give me the
three letters.

sounds out): "c-o-m"

"Good boy, say that out loud. Now, can you finish

very softly): "Complete."

"What does it mean? Kieran?"

an: "Finish."

her points to 'demonstrate' and asks Marie to read.

e reads accurately.

What does it mean?"

e: "Show."

"It's like the vacuums in shops. If you want to buy
they demonstrate it - they show you how it works."

Commentary

Decoding & Defining

Whole class teaching.

LITERACY THROUGH DIRECTED
STUDY

Drawing on existing knowledge.

Modelling source of information. En-
couraging use of dictionary.

Dictionary as authoritative text.

[continuity]

Teacher accepts variety of responses,
suggesting that there is no one correct
answer. Finally accepts dictionary
definition, but does not comment on
fact that pupil has read this verbatim.

Defining literacy status

Teacher positions pupil as poorer
reader.

Encourages phonic decoding strategy.

Literacy = set of skills to be learned

READING : Single word.

Dictionary definitions.

SPEAKING : Explaining, defining.

Teacher builds on pupil response,
elaborating answer. Gives example
relating the word to an everyday
situation.

Observation

Commentary

Teacher points to 'climate'.

Nicola: "Climate. It's the temperature in the room."

T: "We usually use it for a wider area than that, any other ideas?"

Samantha: "The regular weather conditions of an area."

Teacher praises response.

T: "What are the regular weather conditions in June?"

Matthew: "Rain."

T: "No, not usually. It's usually hot, except during Wimbledon fortnight."

Teacher points to 'favourite'.

T: "Look at the spelling carefully. What do you have to be careful about?"

Kieran: "The 'our' bit."

T: "That's right. We say fav -or-it. It doesn't sound as though there's a 'u' so you have to be careful when you write it."

Move on to List 2. Many of these words are the same as List 3 so nominated pupils are expected to read them straight out and no time is spent discussing definitions. Some attention is drawn to specific features of the spelling or phonic cues are given.

James: "Educate."

T: "Terry have a go. Can you sound the first two letters?" (Long pause.) "Try."

Terry: "'o' 'p' "(says letter names).

Teacher gives in and asks another pupil to read the full word.

Teacher points to 'dynamite'.

T: "Look at this word carefully. Which letter is unusual?"

Ann: "y"

T: "Yes, the 'y'. You have to be careful when you write it."

LITERACY AS MEANING
MAKER [continuity]

Trying to ensure that pupils are able to make own sense of the term.

Reference to event that pupils might have interest in.

Drawing explicit attention to difference between spoken and written language.

LITERACY THROUGH DIRECTED STUDY - emphasises phonic cues.

Pupil positioned as someone who may find reading difficult.

Draws attention to specific features of spelling - set of skills to be learned.

Was attention explicitly drawn to ate/ite/ete pattern before my entry?

Observation

Part 2 : Sentence writing

"Now we'll do our individual work."
 Teacher draws attention to the instructions on the board.
 "Write the list of words in your spelling book.
 Then use your exercise book for questions 2 & 3."
 Teacher reads Q.3 aloud.
 "You must get the punctuation correct in the words
 that are spoken. You must have speech marks around
 them. Any punctuation that is needed within the speech
 must be within the speech marks. This might be a full stop
 or a comma. Or, what would you need if you were shout-
 ing something? Oliver?"
 Oliver: "An esca...escalation mark."
 "Exclamation, that's how you say it. An escalator
 is like the moving stairs you go up on. Try not to use the
 word 'said', try to use words that will make your sentence
 exciting. Use your dictionary if you can't remember what
 the words are."

Part 3 : Group Reading

Class working in six small groups. One group finish
 reading "Black Beauty" and fetch Reading Review books.
 The teacher noticed the movement and said she would
 come to talk to them about the work on the board. They
 did not wait, but organised themselves into the task.
 Moonam suggested that they should read the instructions
 and Kaylee did this, reading straight on to the end of the
 advice for question 1.
 Kaylee (reading): "What does it mean when we say a
 classic children's novel? (You may need to read the blurb
 to find this out.)"

Commentary

Teacher explanation.

Whole class instruction.
 Clear instructions on board but
 teacher explains orally as well.

LITERACY AS SET OF SKILLS TO
 BE LEARNED

Makes expectations and standards
 clear re use of punctuation.
 WHAT : Accuracy - relate to
 autonomous model.
 HOW : Use of word in context
 (meaning maker); correct syntax /
 punctuation (object of study).
 Focus on meaning.

Constant encouragement re use of
 dictionary.

TEACHER DOMINANCE

Prescribes type / structure of lan-
 guage that is required.

WRITING : Sentences; speech
 marks; exclamation marks; range of
 vocabulary.

KAL : Direct speech.

Independent group work.

Pupils demonstrate independence as
 move from reading to written work.

Metalanguage

Observation

Kaylee: "We need to look at the back." (Does so.) "It hasn't got a blurb."

All start to flick through. They appear to be searching for something specific. No questioning of instruction.

Poonam locates a short piece of text inside the first page and reads this aloud. It mentions that children have read this book for hundreds of years. She immediately says : Poonam: "A classic novel written one hundred years ago."

Kaylee does not believe that Poonam has located the answer and puts her hand up to attract the teacher's attention.

Teacher comes over.

Kaylee: "Miss, there's no blurb."

Teacher: "Yes there is. What's a classic novel? It tells you."

Teacher takes the book off Kaylee and thumbs through. She directs their attention to the printing on the inside of the back cover. This is a list of other texts in the series and is headed : "Stories that have stood the test of time". Pupils look at this.

Teacher: "So, what is a classic novel?"

Poonam: "Children have been reading it for over one hundred years."

Teacher: "Classic' -- something that we've been using for a long time and which is still around, and we still admire. What are classic cars?"

Edward: "Old cars."

Teacher: "Not just old cars but ones which people have taken a lot of care of and are proud to have. There's classic designs too and classic novels -- stories that have stood the test of time and which are still popular."

Teacher moves away.

Pupils quickly settle to written work.

Stelle: "Title? What shall we call it?"

Commentary

Appears familiar with term 'blurb', clear expectation that it will be on back cover.

Pupils demonstrate familiarity with book parts in way handle text.

LITERACY AS SOCIAL EXPERIENCE

Demonstrates understanding of text by altering word order to suit the question.

Call for higher authority - teacher.

Teacher offers support. Reference to text as authoritative. In fact teacher shows less understanding of term 'blurb' than pupils since the source of information that she directs them to is a list of other titles in the series. Pupils, accepting her authority, do not challenge her.

Teacher as authority

Pupils not asked to read text aloud.

Sticks to her initial response.

Teacher does not build on pupil response. Gives clue, perhaps attempting to draw on existing knowledge, relating word to something known to establish meaning.

Teacher gives definition linked to her example. Does not check pupil understanding.

Aware of need for title without prompting.

Peer support / collaboration.

Observation

Poonam: "The title? "Black Beauty."

All four write this neatly. Estelle & Kaylee in pen, Edward & Poonam in pencil.

Kaylee: "How do I spell 'story'? Does it end 'ie' or 'e'?"
(In the blurb it gives the plural.)

Estelle: "S t o r y . If it's 'ies' for more than one it has a 'y' when there's only one."

Commentary

Selects title of book as most appropriate.
Pupils use different writing tools.
Is this free choice, what is available or teacher direction?
?LITERACY AS IDENTITY

Demonstrates some awareness of spelling rules - aware that different endings are possible.

Teacherly explanation - appears to have been taught spelling 'rule'.
Supportive.

READING : Each pupil reads aloud to small group.
Support each other with decoding unfamiliar words.
Discuss text.
Read questions.
Scan text for specific information.
WRITING : Answer questions in sentences, giving reasons.
Use words of question to structure response.

Extract 3: 7T Geography Observation 6**Observation**

16

Part 1. Keywords & redrafting

T: "This is a very important lesson today where we are going to get most of the work done. You know what you are doing. On the board I have put some instructions to see what we have got to do today."

.....

T: "This writing frame is first draft - when you write it into best it should be better, not just a neat copy but better content. When you write it up you need to make sure that you have included the key words. What do we mean by key words?"

Jayne: "They save you work, They have a lot of meaning."

T: "Key words do carry a lot of meaning. I suppose you can say they save work because you can write one big word that means the same as a lot of smaller ones. We use them to structure our writing."

Cathy: "They show what the writing is about."

T: "Key words are proper words that are only used in certain subjects. What are the key words for this piece of work? What is the word that tells us that all the buildings have been knocked down?"

Noel: "Demolished."

T: "Look at your writing frame. Read through and see if you have used the word 'demolished'. If you find it underline the word and give it a tick. Who has used it? Put your hands up."

No pupil raises a hand.

T: "That's a pity. Perhaps now you will find the opportunity to put it in."

CommentaryExplaining Process - Revision of vocabulary

Whole class teaching.

LITERACY AS ORGANISATIONAL TOOL *[continuity]*

LITERACY THROUGH DIRECT STUDY

LITERACY AS MEANING

MAKER -(used to shape understanding)

Teacher introduces notion that first draft is initial attempt at ideas and that the text needs to be developed, that certain words should be included. Students have the opportunity to add these before (or while) they produce the final version i.e. teacher is influencing the nature of the written product.

Teacher is linking notion of KEY WORD to its subject specific role. Prompting pupils to identify the appropriate key words for this task by giving clues. Thus also revising the new vocabulary introduced during the Urban Trail.

Encouraging pupils to actively scan own text to check whether word has been used and to highlight / tick them to show they are using appropriate vocabulary.

Explicitly encouraging pupils to revise/add to their text so it meets with her approval and becomes more "geographical".

Observation

Commentary

T: "What other key words do we need? What's the word we could use for the litter and the mess?"

Adrian: "Polluting."

T: "It is polluting the place. 'Pollution' is the word. Who has actually used the word 'pollution'? No-one? Jenny, is there an opportunity for you to put it in do you think?"

Jenny: "Yes Miss."

T: "Are there other key words? What is the word that means blocking off one end of the street so that cars can only come in one direction?"

Leon: "Cul-de-sac."

Darren: "One-way-system."

T: "Has anyone used either cul-de-sac (that's a French word), it means you can't get through, or one way system? Put your hands up."

Some pupils have actually used these terms and are commended.

T: "Find the word in your draft. Underline it and give it a tick, that's what I'll do when I come to mark your work. That's what teachers do when they look at what you write."

Pause while pupils check their work.

T: "What word did you use to talk about Whitmore Road? A lot of you said it needed more trees and bushes."

Simon: "Greenery."

MESSAGE : Each subject has its own specialised vocabulary. You need to understand & use these words to demonstrate your knowledge of this subject.

LITERACY THROUGH SUBJECT STUDY

TEACHER language dominant
Teacher accepts pupil suggestion but changes part of speech to match definition more precisely.

Again making it clear that it is not only acceptable but desirable to improve the writing by adding specialised vocabulary at this stage.

Accepts both responses although only one matches the definition.

Further suggestion that pupils act as teacher and check own work.
Do all teachers tick key words when they mark? Rather revealing own emphasis on use of appropriate vocabulary and how this affects the mark which she will give.

Observation

“What other word can you use to mean that you
n lots of trees and bushes to make it look nice?”
k: “Landscape.”
“Landscape, good. Landscape - to make attractive.
k at your work. Who has used landscape? Give it a
and underline it. All teachers tick when they mark.
ck your draft and put in the key words. Perhaps put a
ket after them to explain what they mean.”

he teacher goes through this sequence she writes the
words and meanings into the box she had left within
lesson plan on the blackboard.

olish - to knock down a building
ution - to spoil
de-sac
way system
dscape - to make ✓ attractive

Commentary

First response is not the desired an-
swer so probes further. When the
correct term is supplied teacher gives
it a further definition. Does this con-
fuse?

What audience does this suggest for
the text?

Active demonstration. Showing pu-
pils what she is recommending and
providing a list of words for them to
use.

LITERACY AS RECORD OF
JOINTLY CONSTRUCTED
KNOWLEDGE

ORAL SKILLS :
LISTEN TO DEFINITION AND
IDENTIFY KEY WORD.
READING : SCAN OWN TEXT TO
LOCATE KEY WORD.
WRITING : AMEND OWN TEXT.

tract 4 : 7T History - Observation 3

Observation

Lesson opens with teacher explaining that class will continue with work started in previous lesson - watching video on Roman entertainment. Whole class question/answer session follows discussing what they have learned in the sequence already viewed.

"What was life like in ancient Rome - was it good or was it bad? I told you that today we would design a poster. It can be simple drawings, or more elaborate ones if you are a good artist, but it needs words to bring them to life."

Teacher then works through the 6 questions on the worksheet used to focus observation in the previous lesson. She asks question aloud, pupil answers briefly and teacher elaborates. Sometimes more extended discussion occurs between questions.

"Now, Q3. 'What took place at the Circus Maximus?' Amrita?"

Amrita: "Chariot racing."

"How big was it?"

Amrita: "250,000 people could watch."

"What took place at the Colosseum?"

Amrita: "Gladiators."

Amrita: "Animals."

"Wild animal fighting. On one occasion they reenacted the whole thing and had like a mock naval battle."

Amrita: "Do they still use the Colosseum to do other things?"

"No, not now. It's lost its floor so they can't use it."

Amrita: "It's like a maze."

Commentary

Revisiting previous learning
Whole class question / answer.

Visual literacy
LITERACY THROUGH SUBJECT LEARNING

Establishing purpose for note-taking (teacher purpose). Indicating why pupils need to record information; clarifying expectation that they will restructure their knowledge, obtained from watching the video & note-making, via word & image.

TEACHER as text-mediator.

Teacher structuring interaction & mediating meaning pupils make from text.

LITERACY THROUGH INTERACTION

Pupil as respondent

Number of different pupils contribute, so picture built up jointly.

Often brief, factual recall that volunteered.

Teacher prompts designed to elicit further details.

Is this something that was mentioned or extra information added from teacher experience of visiting the Colosseum?

Pupil initiates discussion by asking a question. Teacher treats this seriously, as valid inquiry.

PUPIL VOICE - questioner

Observation

Commentary

cher commends this description and refers to a photograph r have seen. She looks in one of the guide books and shows n a bird's eye view which shows the passageways.	Using further visual sources rather than offering a verbal description.
“There were a lot of passageways underneath to keep the liators and the wild animals in. Can anyone remember how y exits there were?”	TEACHER as authority
rooki: “18.”	Indicating the importance of recalling factual details.
cher shows other photographs from the guidebooks.	Modelling that information can be obtained from a variety of different sources. Implicit message - learn more by consulting multiple sources because they show things differently.
“Do you remember the Forum? This is a reconstruction what it might have looked like. I know it doesn't look so d but you have to remember that it is 2000 years old.”	
rooki (mutters): “Ancient artefacts.”	Where has he learned this term - on television or other videos?
“It's only recently that we've become really interested in tory. In the past they would have knocked buildings down d used the materials. That's why it is so surprising that the rum is so well-preserved.”	LITERACY AS MEANING MAKER
arren: “It shows how they had it.”	
ef debate ensues over whether ancient buildings should be uilt, modernised, given electricity, lights etc. Teacher points that history / historical buildings have only recently become ourist industry.	Pupil initiated topic. Discussion ranges far beyond the questions on the worksheet or information in the video. Genuine questioning and shared construction of knowledge. Teacher following pupil lead and of- fering explanations where appropri- ate. Reinforcing own authority as knowledgeable adult.
on: “When do things become ancient?”	Another pupil initiates discussion on a different topic. Not directly rele- vant to questions on video but perti- nent in terms of the period under study. Teacher treats idea seriously and extends it to involve other pu- pils.
thinks for a few moments): “At the moment ‘ancient’ stops he end of Rome. It goes from the start of writing to the end Rome. What do we call the time before writing?”	
pils make a variety of suggestions, including BC & AD.	
rooki: “Stone Age?”	
acher picks up on this as being close - part of the time she is nking about.	Space for PUPIL VOICE - COM- MUNITY OF INQUIRY.

Observation

“When there were primates not humans?”

“There’s a prefix at the front of the name, when
 ut little letters at the front of a word, here it means
 e. ‘Pre-history’.
 : ‘Prehistoric.’”

“That was a really good question, Leon.”

en: “How long did it take to build the baths and the
 sseum?”

“It would have taken months to build a baths.”

her uses this opportunity to return to the worksheet
 ions.

“The Colosseum. What does this tell you about the
 an people? The video told you a few opinions - what
 le thought about it.”

e: “Local entertainment.”

sin explains the convention at the end of a fight when
 udience would be asked to indicate by thumbs up or
 a whether or not to kill the gladiator.

“What can you say about the people? What does
 enjoyment of this sort of entertainment tell you?
 e they kind?”

an: “Mean.”

e-Ann: “Evil.”

“They were quite a cruel society. On the whole the
 ty was accepted even if not everyone agreed with it.”

Commentary

Checking his own understanding and attempting to respond to the clues the teacher has given. Questioning tone indicates uncertainty.

Teacher uses metalanguage - making explicit the way in which a prefix alters the meaning of a word. Conscious that pupils may not be familiar with the term, but does not give them a chance to demonstrate whether they have this knowledge. Explanation (‘little letters’) may not be clear. Commends the enquiry - signalling that it is good to think and question in this way.

Another pupil raises question - this time more closely linked to video. LISTENING : teacher questions & explanations.

SPEAKING : recalled facts, questions, raising issues, hypothesising.

Question requires inference rather than literal comprehension.

Pupil response refers to what happens in the Colosseum rather than to what it says about people. Does she not fully understand the question? Next response suggests similar difficulty - literal recall good but not able to draw inferences.

Teacher offers simpler clue and this evokes the desired response.

TEACHER as authority

Expands answer - pupils had not ‘guessed’ the desired word.

Appendix F: Talking Literacy

Extract from a Focused Pupil Interview

Focused Pupil Interview F1 (Simon 7T)

Date: 23.2.99

Time: 2.05 - 2.40

Location: English Office

Focused interview. List of questions arising from analysis of lesson observations written in advance to guide discussion, but order variable and follow-up questions guided by pupil response.

Purpose:

o To elicit pupil perspective on secondary literacy experiences.

o Respondent validation of issues / perceptions from observed lessons.

Contextualisation: Interview explored pupil perceptions of literacy experiences in History and Geography, home literacy practices and comparisons with Y6 literacy practices at home and at school. This extract focuses on response to questions about literacy in Geography.

Legend: R = researcher / interviewer

S = Simon

Colour code and transcript conventions as for Appendix E.

Interview transcript

Commentary

R: Why do you think Miss Somerville went through the draft of the Settlement Report with the whole class, telling you how to develop it into the final version?

S: Probably give you better marks if you use the proper words. It can make it easier, instead of putting 'blah-blah-blah' you can just use one word to explain it. It was quite helpful. I did make some changes, like I learned how to improve it - I didn't put much detail so I decided to put more in when I copied it up.

Focus on key words / subject specific vocabulary. Reflects teacher's main emphasis.

Appreciating need for increased level of detail in the final section. Links to research re boys and lack of detail in extended writing.

Literacy through modelling.

R: How much of the Report did you do at home?

S: I did some of the posters and the cover at home.

R: Did you get much help?

S: I didn't really get much help 'cus Mom doesn't know much about the Small Heath area.

Why do the art work at home rather than the writing? Was this personal choice or influenced by teacher suggestion of appropriate homework tasks?

Response suggesting that maternal support was available for other homework tasks was later confirmed.

Interview transcript

R: Did you know much about volcanoes before you started this topic?
 C: A bit. We did volcanoes in Y5 but then I forgot. Then I was reminded when we first got started, then I could remember quite a lot.
 R: How did you learn about them at primary school?
 C: We learned about different eruptions. We used to look at pictures and diagrams. We never had a textbook like here.
 R: How helpful is the textbook?
 C: Quite helpful. The volcano we are actually talking about is actually in there and there are good diagrams which are easy to understand.
 R: When you read the textbook in class does the teacher usually choose the readers?
 C: Yes.
 R: Why do you think she does this?
 C: If she asks for volunteers some never volunteer and she never hears and never gets to know how good a reader they are, like she asked Darren to read this week and she said, "I didn't know you were such a good reader." So if he had never volunteered she might not have known he could read well.
 R: Does the teacher ever read aloud?
 C: [Pause] I don't think so, maybe once or twice.
 R: I seem to remember one lesson when she read aloud. Why do you think she did this?
 C: Probably to get quickly done - just going over things.
 R: How easy was it to complete the table about stopping the lava flow?
 C: Easy. We had the log so it was just a matter of looking at what was there and putting it in your own words.

Commentary

Re-visiting topic. Needed the activation of prior knowledge activities (brainstorm) as a building block. Discontinuity in type of stimulus material.

Further evidence of introduction of textbooks at the secondary stage.

Values links between pictorial evidence (video) and written text. Sees DIAGRAMS as important to developing understanding. Visual & print literacy through subject learning.

Able to rationalise teacher selection of readers and see its importance.

Practice - Teacher selects reader. Text read aloud & shared.

Literacy as skill to be learned.

Teacher defining pupil literacy status.

Also able to assign purpose to teacher reading aloud. Fact that he had difficulty recalling this instance perhaps indicates its rarity.

Suggests pupil awareness of need to understand/interpret information - that this teacher expects more than a copy of the text.

Interview transcript

Did filling out the table help you to complete the ex-nation using the writing frame afterwards?

Not really. It would have been just as easy to go right to the frame. You had all the information anyway, on log, and just had to copy it again.

Do you think you would have written a better or ger report if you hadn't been given a writing frame?

No, it would have been harder. The writing frame e gives you a way to start off, it gives you an idea for each paragraph so you can remember all the things and it gives u ideas for good ways of setting it out.

Did you ever use writing frames at primary school?

Sometimes, but only for stories, for setting out sto-s, like for a quick draft. then you wrote it out as a full ry.

Why do you think Miss Somerville asked you to ite a news report about the eruption of Mt.Etna?

To make sure we understand about it, when it hap-pened and thinking about the time so that we put only the rrect information.

Was it a good piece of work to end the topic?

Yes, it gave us a chance to show what we had rned.

Did you ever write news reports at primary school?

Yes, sometimes. If we read a story we might do a ws report or a play instead of writing the story.

Did you find the writing frame useful to help you ite the news report?

Some people needed it, some wouldn't.

What about you?

I didn't need the frame. I could have written it all ht without.

Which volcano did you write about?

Mt. St. Helen's. I thought all the others would write out Vesuvius and I wanted to be different.

How did you get the information?

I used Encyclopaedia and Encarta, on the computer at me. I found the information, then I printed it off, then I pried it in my own words.

Commentary

Confirms researcher perception that the table was an unnecessary level of scaffold for some pupils on this fairly simple text.

Perception that writing frame both aids production of appropriate text structure and encourages inclusion of appropriate information. Does this support notion that frames particularly valuable as scaffold for boys? (See contrast with response of Katy F3.)

Continuity - familiarity with writing frame as scaffold.

Discontinuity - text type & use of frame.

Rationalises purpose as drawing together of knowledge and demonstrating understanding.

Literacy as record of learning.

Continuity - writing news report.

Discontinuity - focus on narrative / fiction (creativity) Y6 rather than to illustrate factual learning.

Hinting that frame stifled creativity rather than being supportive.

Awareness of differing pupil needs.

HOME LITERACY - computer / software available. Familiar with use, able to conduct search and locate relevant information.

?Does this mean re-writing text?
Use of independent learning skills.

Interview transcript

Commentary

: A lot of the time the teacher reads the questions and the whole class talks about them and then you write the answers. Do you find this helpful?

If she talks about the first bit so we understand, usually then there's about fifteen minutes left and it's a bit of a rush. I think it'd be better to do just the first bit and then leave us to do it alone.

: Did your Y6 teacher used to go through all the questions like this?

No, just the first bit, then we'd get on.

: Why do you think you were asked to write the postcard about Mt. Etna to your head teacher?

So we understood about and know about the dangers of the volcano.

: Do you think the teacher actually gave him the postcards?

I'm not sure?

: Do you think it was a useful task?

Yes, 'cus you were like put in the position of someone being there, but because it was a postcard there was not much space to put the information down. A diary could have given you more space.

Appreciates need for teacher prompt to start task but also feels the need to be able to work independently and at own pace.

Discontinuity - more teacher-led oral answering of questions before written work 'less independent' learning.

Able to rationalise purpose - EMPATHY - and to identify an alternative method / tasks for achieving this end more appropriately, possibly influenced by writing tasks in History.

Literacy through subject learning.

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